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The Passionate Artifice: Yeats And The Later Renaissance

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THE PASSIONATE ARTIFICE:
YEATS AND THE LATER RENAISSANCE

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ABSTRACT

Although the Renaissance was a period of particular significance to Yeats, few commentators have attempted to assess its importance. As a result, little is known about Yeats's actual encounters with the period. It has not yet been determined, for example, which aspects of the period interested him most, and at what stage in his career. Nor has it been established which Renaissance figures fascinated him most, and hence, made the largest contribution to his development as a poet.

This study is thus designed to determine the character of Yeats's Renaissance, more specifically, the later seventeenth-century English Renaissance. That period was selected for examination here because it has received least critical attention, and, because of its extreme importance as the period which paradoxically both sustained Yeats's ideal and inaugurated the conditions which made the modern attainment of that ideal impossible. Because of its paradoxical nature, it is thus the later Renaissance which had most to contribute to Yeats's understanding of himself and his times, serving not merely as a model, but also as a mask for the modern.

That period is explored here through detailed investigations of Yeats's encounters with three of its most representative figures who were also of particular interest to Yeats--Jonson, Donne and Milton. This thesis is thus divided into three parts, each beginning with a survey of existing studies which bear upon Yeats's relationships with

these figures. Subsequently, an attempt is made to assemble evidence of Yeats's contacts with each figure and to locate his specific references and less direct allusions to each. Major references and allusions are then discussed in some detail in the text which follows, while all are documented in concluding Appendices which also reflect current scholarship and the contents of Yeats's personal library.

These investigations indicate that Yeats's knowledge of the later Renaissance was extensive. They show that he made significant use of that knowledge in his work throughout his career, but especially after 1900. Between 1900 and 1910, for example, his awareness of Renaissance principles and practices helped him to shape the literary principles which directed the change of style which is apparent in his own poetry after The Green Helmet and Other Poems of 1910. In addition, the understanding of the Renaissance which began to take shape in those years is central to the concept of history which later provided the basis for the historical system of A Vision.

But although these investigations justify claims for the importance of the Renaissance, they also point to the need for further study--for explorations of Yeats's relationships with other Renaissance figures and for an assessment of the general significance of the period to his life and work. Even at this point, however, it may be concluded that his encounter with the later Renaissance was important, for what it taught him about his ideals, for the skills which he acquired from its literature, and especially, for what it enabled him to discover about himself and his time.

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I would also like to thank Miss Anne Yeats for providing the information about her father's library which appears in my Appendices.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the assistance of the Canada Council.

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

All abbreviations except UP, I; UP, II and Memoirs are those used by Jeffares in his commentaries noted below.

Yeats

Primary Sources

A	Autobiographies (London: Macmillan, 1955)
AV(A)	A Vision (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1925)
AV(B)	A Vision (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1966)
CP	Collected Poems, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1950)
CPl	Collected Plays, 2nd ed. (London. Macmillan, 1952)
DWL	Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley (London: Oxford University Press, 1940)
E	Explorations (London: Macmillan, 1962)
E&I	Essays and Introductions (London: Macmillan, 1961)
L	Letters, ed. Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954)
LNI	Letters to the New Island, ed. Horace Reynolds (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934)
Memoirs	Memoirs, ed. Denis Donoghue (London: Macmillan, 1972)
M	Mythologies (London: Macmillan, 1959)
OTB	On the Boiler (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1939)
UP, I	Uncollected Prose, ed. J. P. Frayne, Vol. I (London: Macmillan, 1970)
UP,II	Uncollected Prose, ed J. P. Frayne and Colton Johnson, Vol. II (London: Macmillan, 1975)

VE	The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats, ed. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (New York: Macmillan, 1957)
Y&TSM	W. B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore. Their Correspondence 1901-1937, ed. Ursula Bridge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953)

Secondary Sources

Comm	A. N. Jeffares, A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (London: Macmillan, 1968)
HG	An Honoured Guest: New Essays on W. B. Yeats, ed. Denis Donoghue and J. R. Mulryne (London: Arnold, 1965)
LT	Thomas Rice Henn, The Lonely Tower (London: Methuen, 1965)
RI	Frank Kermode, Romantic Image (New York: Random House, 1957)

Except in special circumstances abbreviations p. and pp. and l. and ll. have been omitted. References are designated by page number only in the text of the thesis, Notes and Appendices. P. and pp. have, however, been used in the Bibliography.

CITATIONS

Jonson

Plays: Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, III-VII (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1927-41).

[Cited as H & S, followed by Act, Scene and Line References.]

Masques: Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques, ed. with an Introduction by Stephen Orgel, The Yale Ben Jonson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969)

[Cited as Yale ed., followed by page references.]

Poetry: Poems of Ben Jonson, ed. George Burke Johnston, The Muses Library (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954).

[Cited as Poems, ed. Johnston, followed by page references for poems of less than 100 lines, page and line references for longer poems.]

Prose: Timber; or Discoveries, in Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1947), VIII, 561-649.

[Cited with line references.]

CITATIONS

Donne

Poetry: The Complete Poems of John Donne, ed. with Introduction and Commentary by Herbert J. C. Grierson, 2 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1912)

[Cited with volume and page numbers, line references for poems of more than 100 lines.]

CITATIONS

Milton

Prose and Poetry:	John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957)
	[Cited with page, book and line references, where applicable.]

FOREWORD

> Full of the spirit of the Renaissance, at once passionate and artificial, looking upon the world now as craftsman, now as connoisseur, [Spenser] was to found his art upon theirs . . .
>
> "Edmund Spenser," 1902

The Renaissance was unique in Yeats's experience. Just as Spenser helped to determine the character of seventeenth-century English literature by founding his art on that of his predecessors, including Tasso and Ariosto, so Yeats gave shape to the emerging nature of twentieth-century poetry by his response to Spenser and his successors. The Renaissance, however, offered Yeats more than a literary model. As a source of personal masks and itself a mask for the times, it was the great counter-truth without which neither he nor his times could be defined. It was that other age, "historical or imaginary," to which he was linked and where, as a passionate man, he found images which roused his energy (A, 152). Vehemently hated and loved, the age was fraught with contradictions. "I detest the Renaissance," he wrote in 1938 in a now well-known expression of its ambivalence, "because it made the human mind inorganic; I adore the Renaissance, because it clarified form and created freedom" (OTB, 27).

Designated by Yeats as the period from Dante to Milton, but especially important to Yeats for the years after Spenser, it was a time

when synthesis seemed possible, and when "men attained to personality, 'Unity of Being,' 'a perfectly proportioned human body'" (A, 291). Yet it was also the time when synthesis became impossible, when rifts and cracks held together through "imperious impulse," began to widen fatally. In that last burst, however, at the time of Shakespeare, personality suddenly flashed, passion was for the moment the whole energy of being, and the moment of history which spoke so specially to Yeats, finally arrived. What resulted from Yeats's encounter with that moment was an engagement, a total engagement of the past with the present out of which the Renaissance emerged as a passionate artifice, a potent combination of opposites held together with an imaginative force as strong as the impulse which had held the original synthesis, yet answerable to history because wrought from the achievements of Yeats's own, most distinguished predecessors.

Although he had been familiar with the work of those predecessors since the beginning of his career, having been influenced by Spenser, Jonson and Milton in the 1880's, Yeats did not begin to see the Renaissance as a distinct historical period until after 1900. The period as a whole, as well as its relation to the modern age, emerged most clearly from "Edmund Spenser" which, along with letters written to Lady Gregory during its composition in 1902, documents the formation of the stance which lies at the root of his critical method. The tendency to emphasize the effects of social change on literature which characterizes that stance had been evident in Yeats's earlier work, in, for example, "A Poetic Drama" (1891) from Letters to the New Island and "At Stratford-on-Avon" (1901), but it

was not until the essay on Spenser, "all founded on a single idea [,] the contrast between Anglo-French England and Anglo-Saxon England" (L, 391), that its potentiality for future criticism and for later poetry was fully apparent. Still later, that stance reappeared in his letter to Bullen where he expressed an interest "in the ideal of life which flitted before the eyes of Jonson and the others when they thought of the Court" (L, 478-79), and so pointed to the character of his own social idealism.

More particularly, the essay on Spenser is important for the specific conclusions which Yeats reached about Spenser and his time. His observations that Spenser was "born at the moment of change" (E&I, 367) and that his art had appeared at a "crossroad" (357) reflect Yeats's growing sense of the shape of the period. They also point to his recognition of limits to Spenser's value to him as a modern poet. As he suggests in his later letter to Bullen, his study of Spenser directed him to Jonson and other seventeenth-century successors whose solutions to the problems which beset their historical moment more closely approximated twentieth-century requirements.

None the less, Yeats's approach to those later figures was largely determined by his analysis of Spenser. For example, his observation that the Renaissance was both passionate and artificial takes its place with the catalogue of opposites used to describe Donne in his letter to Grierson of 1912, while both the essay and the letter descend from the view of history which Yeats shared with nineteenth-century Romantics. Similarly, Yeats cultivated the combination of craftsman and connoisseur

which he discerned in the artists of the Renaissance through his own pursuit of a Jonsonian concept of the poet as professional, in combination with his desire to experiment with all the masks of life yet write for a select few, like those who were present for the first performance of Comus.

With regard to the Renaissance, the early years of this century were exploratory for Yeats. By 1906 when he told Bullen that he was "drifting about" among the Elizabethans (L, 479) he had read some of Jonson, Dekker and Chapman, written essays on Shakespeare and Spenser, and learned enough about Jacobean lyricists to have looked to them as a model while a Rhymer in the nineties. A survey of several works, including Autobiographies, Explorations, Essays and Introductions, "Discoveries: Second Series" and Poems of Spenser, points to his continuing interest in the Renaissance while the extent of his familiarity with the period is apparent in the wide cross-section of figures directly mentioned in his texts. His selection includes Crashaw, Herbert, Lyly, Marvell, Massinger, Nash and Webster (each cited once); Chapman, Donne and Herrick (each cited twice); Cowley and Sidney (each cited four times); Marlowe (cited five times); Spenser (cited ten times in addition to "Edmund Spenser"); Jonson (cited fifteen times); Milton (cited eighteen times) and Shakespeare (cited at least forty-eight times). Evidence of his knowledge of the period is, however, even more substantial since it includes direct references made elsewhere in his work to these and other figures, as well as the several indirect references and allusions to all Renaissance figures which appeared throughout his career. Although many of these references and allusions are slight, often passing, others are extremely

important, providing not merely an insight into the aspects of the Renaissance which most interested Yeats, but also an indication of how they contributed to his own modern achievement.

Jonson, Donne and Milton were specifically selected for this study for a variety of reasons. Most obviously, they were eligible because Yeats referred to them often. He referred especially to Jonson and Milton whom he mentioned more frequently than any other Renaissance figures, Shakespeare and possibly Spenser excepted. Yeats's use of Shakespeare has, however, already been the subject of a recent study, to be noted below, while Spenser has largely been excluded from consideration here because his achievement came too early. No major studies of Yeats's relationship with Jonson, Donne or Milton have yet appeared, even though many of Yeats's references to all three were substantively important, notably his remarks about Jonson and Donne in letters of 1906 and 1912 respectively. Finally, more extensive research has borne out an initial surmise that as major figures of the later Renaissance, Jonson, Donne and Milton together were particularly capable of revealing the precise nature of Yeats's Renaissance since each contributed distinctly different characteristics to a comprehensive view of their time.

Jonson has been considered first because, although all three figures had renewed importance for Yeats after 1900, Jonson's influence appeared earliest in his work, first becoming apparent in The Green Helmet and Other Poems of 1910. Tending as it did to coincide with Yeats's awareness of himself as a professional poet and his function as a craftsman and custodian of literary forms and conventions, the general character of his influence was formative in at least two senses. First, it was develop-

mental and most important to Yeats in the early stages of his search for a style. Second, it was more specifically formal, apparent in Yeats's later adaptation of poetic forms and conventions, especially those adapted from the country house genre. In particular, Jonson offered Yeats masks of the poet in relation to his audience and society in general, primarily as social satirist and idealist, which allowed him to make his earliest and most radical escape from the mannerisms of the nineties.

Donne's influence, chronologically most important to Yeats after his encounter with Jonson, has been considered next. Although its effects were apparent in Yeats's thought early in the century by way of nineteenth-century traditions, it is evident with renewed vitality after 1912. While the Grierson edition undoubtedly contributed to Yeats's resurgent interest in Donne, there are other reasons why Donne was of particular value at that time. By 1912 Yeats had been schooled in Renaissance methods through his knowledge of Jonson. Among the poets of this century he was thus uniquely capable of responding to Donne's influence. Also, the Grierson edition brought Donne to the fore among potential influences at a time when Yeats needed a new stimulus. Having developed his satiric persona he was about to shift his subject matter from the public sphere to the private world of personal emotion where Donne's mask had special value. While Jonson had offered masks of the poet as professional and the poet in society, Donne offered masks as a connoisseur of life and death--as a witty lover, as a spiritually tortured divine, and as unaccommodated man, face to face with his mortality.

But although Donne spoke to Yeats's desire to dramatize himself by providing an example of a poet adopting a series of poses, Donne's influence in this regard was more than stylistic. It reached to the heart of his theory of personality. As more than literary devices Yeats's increasingly sophisticated dramatic poses are indications of his growing insight into the complexities of human personality.

Finally, Milton has been considered last. In Yeats's view he closed the Renaissance, presiding over the time when the two elements, the sacred and the profane, fell apart, giving him his "unreality and cold rhetoric" (AV(B), 295). At the same time, he offered a more comprehensive poetic mask than either of his contemporaries. Since he is almost the only poet whose achievement may be compared with Milton's in terms of his ambition and the genres he employed, Yeats is one of the few capable of assuming Milton's mask. Because Milton made every literary kind his own, and saw that the poet's business was with his nation and ultimately, a messianic kingdom in which human short-comings were transcended, Milton's example served as a precedent for Yeats's early nationalism as well as the impulse behind A Vision, while his work provided a model for the prophetic strain in Yeats's poetry.

More particularly, Yeats fashioned a mask from Milton's image of the Platonist toiling in his lonely tower. That mask identified him as a member of the long tradition of mystics and philosophers. Paradoxically, through dramatization that mask allowed him to reveal his skepticism of all knowledge not directly acquired through experience. Similarly, while Milton offered Yeats his most ambitious role as poet, he also provided an example of its limitations. Yeats learned from Milton, as from

no other predecessor, that the energy of life cannot be contained within form. Milton stands at the end of the Renaissance because in Yeats's view his attempts at synthesis failed. Yet that failure is precisely why he was particularly important to Yeats. As the only poet whom Yeats could emulate at the end of an era his was the only achievement which could provide a mask for civilization on the edge of a new dispensation.

In order to assess the fate of his civilization from a long historical and cosmic perspective Yeats ultimately needed to see the Renaissance as the distinct historical period which began to take shape in the early years of the century. Accordingly, his ability to integrate his several responses to the Renaissance into a single, albeit complex and contradictory, understanding was of paramount importance throughout his career. Yet in his later work Yeats was not primarily attempting to define the Renaissance, or to discover masks for himself. Rather, his aim was the application of his knowledge of the past to his expression of the meaning of the present and future. Thus he directed his understanding of the Renaissance, the epitome of Western Civilization and the apex of its thought, to the revelation of its great counter-truth, that which remained to modern civilization and contemporary man and is finally represented by man's "blood-sodden heart" amid "the desolation of reality."

Because the Renaissance was finally important to Yeats as a distinct but largely undifferentiated historical period, there is a special need to discover its character in particular detail. This study has been an attempt to reveal that character through an exploration of Yeats's response to three representative and historically important figures who

were of special significance to Yeats. Every attempt has been made to ensure that this study is as comprehensive as possible although, inevitably, some references and certainly many allusions have been overlooked. In order to take into account as many references and allusions as possible, including those which could not be accommodated in the text, appendices have been added. With respect to allusions in particular, attempts at comprehensiveness are almost futile, in view of their numbers as well as the highly subjective nature of their relevance. Accordingly it is hoped that what has been included in the appendices which follow will be regarded as a representative selection which provides indications of how and where, as well as when and how often, Yeats's interest in these three figures was manifest in his work. Similarly, references and allusions which have been treated within the text itself must in many cases be regarded as representative rather than definitive. Often material has been included which although difficult to integrate into a running text, seemed necessary to illustrate a particular aspect of Yeats's interest in the period. In addition, other references and allusions have been treated more than once. While undoubtedly responsibility must be taken for unnecessary repetition, some has been unavoidable in order to illustrate how certain aspects of the period influenced Yeats in different ways and at different times, often as a result of his interest in different individuals. Finally, in both text and appendices, every effort has been made to acknowledge sources and document research to date as fully as possible. To that end an attempt has been made to include all observations of Yeats's indebtedness, no matter how speculative.

For the sake of brevity, and to correspond with the particular nature of the Renaissance accomplishments under consideration, this study has largely been confined to Yeats's poetry and prose, although exceptions have been made in cases where his plays seemed to have a direct bearing on his poetic development. Even then however, they have been considered for their poetic rather than theatrical value.

Texts, noted in the Bibliography, have been chosen for the convenience of the reader and, where possible, with regard for those also available to Yeats. Except where indicated, abbreviations are those used by Jeffares in his commentaries on Collected Poems and Collected Plays. Similarly, unless otherwise noted, dates cited are those established by Jeffares. For convenience, references have been cited within the text wherever possible. When several occur together, however, information appears in notes at the end of the thesis.

Finally, a study of influence is beset by many problems, including those related to questions about the nature of influence itself. In the belief that such questions can be answered only in the light of specific textual evidence, this study is meant as a preliminary to the larger, but inevitable, challenge which those questions represent. For that reason it has been termed an examination of Yeats's 'encounter' with the Renaissance, rather than an assessment of its 'influence.' Hopefully, it reveals that what took place was an exchange; that while Yeats learned from the Renaissance and took from it, he also acquired knowledge about his own time, which in turn contributed to his re-valuations of the Renaissance. Midway in that process he unwittingly provided a name for

what resulted. Calling artists the servants of mere naked life, he termed them "Artificers of the Great Moment." Accordingly, Yeats's encounter with the Renaissance produced a Great Moment, a passionate artifice, that paradoxically helped bring him closer to the naked life which he served.

PART A: Yeats and Jonson

"I am deep in Ben Jonson. . . . I am thinking of writing something on Ben Jonson, or more likely perhaps upon the ideal of life that flitted before the imagination of Jonson and the others when they thought of the Court."

Letter to Bullen, 21 September 1906

. . . inwardly, surmise companions
Beyond the fling of the dull ass's hoof
--Ben Jonson's phrase-- . . .

Closing Rhyme to Responsibilities, 1914

CHAPTER I

Introductory

1. Survey of Criticism

Mrs Yeats's remark that although "Jonson was 'not one of Yeats's gods' . . . he read and admired him greatly" is perhaps the most balanced statement of the literary relationship between Yeats and Jonson which has yet appeared.[1] To date, however, no comprehensive survey of that relationship has been undertaken, although Jonson's importance to Yeats is at least partially acknowledged by Yeats specialists. A good introduction is provided by Thomas McAlindon ("Yeats and the English Renaissance," PMLA (May 1967), 157-69) whose case for the importance of the Renaissance as an influence behind the change which became evident in Yeats's poetry of 1910 and 1914 rests in part on Yeats's identification with Jonson's literary persona (164-69). Because he considers that this change was due "in large measure" to Yeats's "defiant adoption of an aristocratic outlook and a corresponding expression of anti-democratic sentiments," McAlindon places particular emphasis on Jonson's influence on Yeats as a social poet, both as "a praiser of life . . . and an energetic satirist of all that is anti-life" (169). Thus, in addition to the satiric poetry of 1910-14, McAlindon also attends to Yeats's 'aristocratic' poetry, especially "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" and the Coole Park poems, discovering parallels with Yeats's work in both Jonson's poetry and drama.

Jonson's specific role in Yeats's definition of the significance of Coole and Lady Gregory is pursued in greater detail by Daniel Harris whose Coole Park and Ballylee (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1974) appeared as this study was in progress. Although his study is by no means comprehensive Harris provides what is to date the fullest consideration of Jonson's value to Yeats, having included a brief survey of Yeats's "debt to Jonson's verse" to illustrate what he terms Yeats's "immersion in Jonson's thought" (69-73). On the whole, however, his focus is steadily fixed on Coole and Thoor Ballylee, the location of Yeats's ideal. As a result, he has produced an important study of the function of place in Yeats's poetry which includes a detailed examination of Yeats's adaptation of the conventions of the country house genre and his membership in the poetic tradition which extends to Yeats from Jonson's "To Penshurst" and "To Sir Robert Wroth."

Other, more specialized studies, are less comprehensive. For example, Yeats's attention to Jonson as a dramatist and contemporary of Shakespeare is explored by Rupin W. Desai in Yeats's Shakespeare (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971) where, in addition to examining Jonson's contribution to Yeats's description of Shakespeare as a man of Phase 20, Desai also traces Yeats's references to what he believes to be Jonson's description of Shakespeare in The Poetaster (see especially Chapter II, 35-41). While Yeats's general interest in Jonson's plays and its influence on Yeats's poetry is noted, both in some detail and in passing remarks, by several commentators, its influence on his plays, which is less extensive, is considered briefly in only three studies, S. B. Bushrui's Yeats's Verse Plays and Peter Ure's Yeats the Playwright (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963) and later essay, "The Plays" (in An Honoured Guest: New

Essays in W. B. Yeats, ed. Denis Donoghue and J. R. Mulryne (London: Edward Arnold, 1965). In Ure's book, the earliest of the three, Ure observes that some of Jonson's plays contain similar matchings of the parodic roles of poet and prophet in The Player Queen (137), while in his essay, he suggests that in The King's Threshold, Seanchan turns the threshold into "an emblem which is also a playing place," just as "the house in The Alchemist is made the centre of the spider's web" (152-53). A different, and perhaps more direct, kind of influence has been suggested by Bushrui for whom the minor characters of The Green Helmet "in their boisterousness, and . . . rascality" are reminiscent of some of Ben Jonson's" (208).

Yeats's very early interest in Jonson is acknowledged by Dwight Eddins who considers the influence of Jonson's Sad Shepherd on Yeats's Island of Statues (Yeats: The Nineteenth-Century Matrix (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1971), 17-18). Generally, however, most commentators have placed the onset of Jonson's influence on Yeats somewhat later so that no real consideration has been given to its importance in the years up to and immediately after 1900. Yeats's 1906 letter to Bullen (L, 478-79) the first point of contact after 1900 to receive attention, is noted by Bushrui (169), McAlindon (164) and Harris (73) while McAlindon also observes that Yeats's choice of the title Discoveries in 1907 "can hardly have been accidental" (164).

More attention, however, has been given to the effects of Jonson's influence on the poems published in The Green Helmet and Responsibilities. Those who note the importance of Jonson's influence in these volumes

include, in addition to McAlindon and Harris, Peter Allt, Harold Bloom, Bushrui, Donald Davie, and Thomas R. Whitaker.[2] In particular, Yeats's invocation of Jonson's name in the Closing Rhyme to Responsibilities is cited as evidence of his importance. While that invocation clearly identifies Yeats with Jonson the satirist, Davie, for example, points to at least two other aspects of its importance, suggesting that it announces a new phase of Yeats's writing life:

> it's at this time, when Yeats sees himself, not as an isolated individual dramatizing himself and his personal predicaments, but as a professional hired to serve a patron; when he sees himself above all as in the lineage of Ben Jonson and the poets of Renaissance Europe--it's at this time that Yeats strives for and sometimes attains that impersonality, that effect of anonymity, which alone can make a poet the best sort of model for others to follow. ("Master of a Trade," in Integrity, 67)

That is, he sees that that invocation inaugurates a new phase in Yeats's career as poet-craftsman which bears upon his continuing importance to practising poets, as well as a new stage in his expression of relationship to Lady Gregory and Coole. For him, the most significant point in the Closing Rhyme is not the early citation of Jonson's name, but the later line, "Being but a part of ancient ceremony," which he sees as Yeats's recognition that his relationship to Coole and Lady Gregory as patron was that "which Ben Jonson celebrated in many of his verse epistles, and which he preferred to being patronized by the public at large, just as Yeats preferred it after his disappointment with Abbey Theatre audiences" ("Master of a Trade," in Integrity, 66. See also "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," in HG, 82-84).

In addition, several remark upon the Jonsonian character of Yeats's aristocratic social ideals and the specific parallel which may be drawn

between Jonson's "To Penshurst" and other poems to patrons like the Sidneys and Yeats's poetic treatments of Coole Park and the Gregories. With McAlindon, Harris and Davie, Marjorie Perloff, Balachandra Rajan and Charles Tomlinson note the relationship between Coole and its owners and the tradition established with Jonson's "To Penshurst."[3] In addition, both McAlindon and Harris detect the presence of Jonson's Cary-Morison ode behind Yeats's "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory."

Finally, both Jon Stallworthy (Vision and Revision in Yeats's 'Last Poems' (London: Macmillan, 1968),139-40)and J. R. Mulryne ("The Last Poems," in HG, 125-26) suggest that the "Rocky Face" of "The Gyres" (1936-37) and the "Rocky Voice" of "The Man and the Echo" (1938) are derived from Yeats's recollection of the phrase "rockie face" from Jonson's "On My Picture Left in Scotland." Noting that the complex enigmatic significance of the phrase in "The Gyres," is derived from many sources, including the Delphic Oracle, Oriental ascetic and cave-dwelling Ahauserus, as well as Jonson's poem, Mulryne emphasizes the importance of the latter:

> I think the alteration from the 'Cavern Face' of an earlier draft[4] might have been prompted by a reading of Ben Jonson's "My Picture Left in Scotland"; in this beautifully deft piece of ironic self-pity a 'rockie face' is the poet's own pictured countenance seamed by time in contradistinction to his accomplished, ageless art. Yeats would have taken pleasure in such an oblique reference and in the varied conceits the poem suggests upon the relation of Face with Mask and Time with Art--the face is aged and yet preserved through art. In any case the Rocky Face in Jonson's poem, as also evidently in "The Gyres," is the poet's own--or a transformation of it. (125-26)

Thus Yeats commentators, ever mindful of the paramount importance of Yeats's theory of the Mask, have unwittingly established the need for more studies of the literary relationship between Yeats and Jonson which would be at once, more comprehensive and complex. By suggesting that Yeats identified with this important Renaissance precursor not only in his middle

period when he adopted Jonson's satiric persona, but also in his later tributes to Lady Gregory where he posed as a poet to her court, and even later, in "The Gyres," where Yeats almost surely deliberately associated himself in a very personal way with Jonson in his old age, these commentators have pointed to Yeats's life-long appreciation of Jonson, as well as his continual attempt to understand himself better through the adoption of Jonson's mask.

On the whole, Jonson specialists have had little to say about Jonson's influence on Yeats. T. G. Nichols with his Poetry of Ben Jonson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) is, however, an exception. In addition to references to Yeats in his text, including mention of Yeats's 'Jonsonian' expression of contemporary sensibility through classical references (87-88) and of similarities in his attitudes to his work (131-32), Nichols includes his discovery of four of Yeats's reminiscences of Jonson in Appendix B, "Jonson and Yeats" (161-62). The only other reference to Yeats appears in John J. Enck's passing acknowledgement of Yeats's discussion of Volpone in On the Boiler: "Yeats's opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, Celia and Bonario scarcely count in the welter of cheating" ("From Jonson and the Comic Truth" [1957], Jonson: Volpone; A Casebook, ed. Jonas A. Barish (London: Macmillan, 1972), 147).

2. Evidence of Encounters

A survey of Yeats's direct references to Ben Jonson clearly indicates that throughout his career Yeats maintained a vital interest in Jonson. These direct references appear to begin with a casual observation in 1891, that audiences "loved Ben Jonson's Masks" in Letters to the New Island ("A Poetic Drama," 216), and continue until On the Boiler of 1938-39 (E, 445). But although it is useful and valuable to investigate these more than thirty direct references, it is also important to note several comments which seem to be definite allusions to Jonson.[5] Some of these allusions are undoubtedly the result of natural affinities between the two poets, while others are almost certainly deliberate appropriations from Jonson. Ultimately, the combination of direct and indirect references to Jonson and his works, as well as less direct allusions and parallels, suggests that Jonson was a much more significant influence on Yeats than has hitherto been recognized.

Yeats's familiarity with Jonson's works appears to have been substantial. He refers directly, although not always accurately, to Jonson's plays, masques, poetry and prose. He seems to have been familiar with, and willing to use, popular assessments of Jonson's life and personality, what might be termed 'Jonsonian lore'--especially with respect to his relationship with Shakespeare. Finally, he was almost certainly aware of the several theatre controversies in which Jonson became embroiled and their subsequent influence upon his poetry and plays.

Yeats saw performances of more than one of Jonson's plays and his comments indicate that his experiences as a theatre-goer helped to shape his own theory and practice. For example, in a letter to Lady Gregory, 30 May 1905, he praised The Silent Woman, saying that in contrast to W. S. Gilbert's Palace of Truth, "details were full of invention and vitality, and language was like a torrent" (L, 450). The Silent Woman is thus an example of how comedy should be written, a standard from the past which moderns should emulate. Jonson's play must have been particularly memorable for Yeats since he refers to it again in his Discoveries (1907) where he contrasts the inadequate response of a modern audience with what he considers the more appropriate response of an Elizabethan audience (E&I, 280). 1921 brings evidence of Yeats's continuing interest in Jonson's plays. In February he reported that a performance of Volpone was finer than he had expected, while in July he expressed regret at missing Bartholomew Fair since he "always wanted especially to know how the puppet scenes would work out," and because it was "one of the things that influenced Synge" (Letter to Miss Fredman, 8 February 1921, L, 664-65 and, Letter to Allan Wade, 10 July 1921, L, 671).

In addition, an examination of Yeats's library in 1975 has borne out the truth of Mrs Yeats's remark that Yeats "read and admired" Jonson greatly since he appears to have owned several editions of various works.[6] Among them, is Gifford's edition of The Works of Ben Jonson in three volumes which originally appeared in 1871. Although the centre front fly-leaf of the copy now in Yeats's library is signed "Georgie Hyde-Lees," indicating that that volume or the entire set might have belonged to Mrs Yeats or was loaned to her before her marriage, it is highly likely that

in the early years at least, one of Gifford's several editions of Works served as Yeats's basic text. With respect to the copy now in Yeats's library, it has been reported that although a number of pages in Volume III remain uncut, those containing Timber; or Discoveries (389-425) have been entirely cut, confirming an interest in that work and pointing to a possible source of its early availability to Yeats.

Also, there is still a copy of Henry Morley's edition of Masques and Entertainments which appeared in 1890 and includes an Introduction by Gifford. The presence of this volume, which contains almost all of Jonson's masques and entertainments, as well as Jonson's own commentaries, suggests that Yeats had access to those works in the nineties, when he was preparing for a change in his poetic style and making his first sorties into the world of the theatre where the masque was to have a considerable influence on the development of modern drama.

Yeats also seems to have had an early interest in reading Jonson's plays. His library still contains Volume III of the Mermaid Ben Jonson which includes Volpone, Epicoene and The Alchemist. It is probable that at one time Yeats also owned the other two volumes in the Mermaid set which first appeared between 1893 and 1895 and was reissued in 1904. It is thus likely that he had early access to Every Man in His Humour, Every Man Out of His Humour and Poetaster (in Vol. I), and Bartholomew Fair, Cynthia's Revels and Sejanus (in Vol. II). He also possessed a copy of W. Macneile Dixon's edition of Every Man in His Humour (1903), as well as Percy Simpson's 1919 edition of the same play, indicating that he might have had a particular interest in that comedy. Indeed, the fact that

Simpson inscribed Yeats's copy with Herrick's "Prayer to Ben Jonson" ("When I a verse shall make, / Know I have prayed thee, For old religion's sake, / Saint Ben, to aid me. / . . . "),[7] perhaps to parallel Dixon's printing of Herrick's "An Ode For Him" ("'Ah, Ben! / Say how, or when / Shall we thy guests / Meet. . . .'") opposite page v in his edition,[8] suggests that Yeats and Simpson shared a deep respect for Jonson's achievement. Although Yeats himself did not write 'Jonsonian' comedy, his apparent enjoyment of Every Man in His Humour confirms that he appreciated Jonson's comic art, making it plausible to suggest that he learned much about comedy, particularly that written by his contemporaries at the Abbey, from Jonson and his works.

In addition, it has been reported that Yeats paid special attention to Every Man in His Humour in Volume III of Herford and Simpson's Ben Jonson which appeared in 1927. Indeed, the presence in Yeats's library of the first five volumes of this set--all that were published in his lifetime--offers proof of his continuing interest in Jonson, while the parts of individual volumes which appear to have interested Yeats most, confirm his earlier preferences for Jonson's prose and certain plays, as well as his curiosity about Jonson's biography. In particular, those pages which have been cut include, in addition to most of Every Man in His Humour, those containing the "Life" (to 77), "Conversations with Drummond" (187-228; 250-54) and "Books in Jonson's Library"(275 to end of volume).

Thus, although Yeats may have studied Jonson in other editions since he almost surely had access to other copies of his work, the present contents of his library corroborate reports of his long-standing practice of reading, and therefore, learning from Jonson.

CHAPTER II

Spheres of Influence

1. Drama

In view of Yeats's apparent enjoyment of contemporary productions of Jonson's plays, his several references to Poetaster, and his specific interest in Jonson's masques revealed in his letter to Bullen, it is highly unlikely that he failed to give specific thought to Jonson's theatrical works. His debt to Jonson's plays, although scarcely evident in his own, is clearly apparent in his poetry and prose. On the other hand, Jonson's masques, which were particularly important to him during the period when he was developing his literary principles, influenced all aspects of his work.

As noted earlier, Yeats owned copies of Everyman in His Humour (ed. 1903) and, in Volume III of the Mermaid Series, Volpone, Epicoene and The Alchemist. In addition it is highly likely that he also possessed Volumes I and II in that series which include Everyman in His Humour, Everyman Out of His Humour, and Poetaster (I), and Bartholomew Fair, Cynthia's Revels and Sejanus (II). Although his library now contains later editions, including a set of Works (ed. Herford and Simpson, 1925-37), it is the presence of the earlier editions which quite possibly sheds light on his reading in the formative years before 1910 that is most important to this study.

In addition, in the nineties, information about Jonson's masques was available to Yeats from at least three sources: the Gifford-Cunningham Works, Swinburne's Study of Ben Jonson which appeared in book form in 1889 (see below), and H. J. C. Morley's edition of Masques and Entertainments which was published in 1890. As noted above, Yeats's library still contains a copy of Morley's edition which includes an Introduction by Morley and a Comment by Gifford, both of which may well have helped to shape Yeats's thoughts on Jonson's masques and Elizabethan audiences.

For example, Gifford emphasizes the nobility of the performance of the Renaissance court masque: ". . . it may be justly questioned whether a nobler display of grace and elegance and beauty was ever beheld than appeared in the Masques of Jonson" (xxvii). He particularly notes that the masque had not been intended for ordinary performers but had been written to be performed for princes by princes. Similarly, Morley remarks upon the society for which the masques were written and the unique relationship between audience and performer upon which they depended: ". . . the novelty was not in the disguising but in the fact that the persons disguised were the king and gentlemen of his court" (ix). He describes particular performances of specific masques at some length and considers the names of participants of sufficient interest and importance to be listed in his Introduction. The interest of Gifford and Morley in the persons who took part in the masques of the Renaissance may well have inspired Yeats's remarks on "the audience that loved Ben Jonson's Masks" in "A Poetic Drama" in 1891, and, even more likely, led to Yeats's request in his 1906 letter to Bullen for a book that would tell of "the various ladies one lights upon in Ben

Jonson's Masques" (L, 479).[9]

Other contemporaries were also interested in Jonson's masques. In the nineties and early years of this century Yeats's friends and associates in London, including Gordon Craig, explored the possible contribution of the masque and related forms of theatre to the development of modern drama. Indeed Yeats's involvement with Craig and his friends significantly influenced his contribution to the Irish theatre movement and brought the activities of that movement closer to innovations in contemporary drama in England and the continent.[10]

Having attended the Purcell Society's 1901 productions of Dido and Aeneas and The Masque of Love, Yeats praises Craig's scenery calling it "the first beautiful scenery our stage has seen" (E&I, 100). A year later, he hails it as "a new and distinct art," suggesting that the staging of these two works will be "remembered among the important events of our time" (Letter to the Editor of the Saturday Review, 5 March 1902, 365-66). But although sympathetic to many of these innovations, especially with regard to setting and costume, Yeats diverges from Craig on at least one very significant point--the role of the poet. On one occasion he remarks that "Craig's scenery is amazing but rather distracts one's thoughts from the words" (Letter to Lady Gregory, April 1903, L, 398). In Samhain: 1903, for example, he recommends that "words must be restored to their sovereignty" in the theatre. As his second reform, he urges that "speech must be made even more important than gesture upon the stage" (E, 108). He encourages both writers and audiences to develop "a stronger feeling for beautiful and appropriate language" and strive to make the theatre "a place of intellectual excitement" (107). By contrast, Craig writes of the theatre

as a 'total experience':

> The Art of the Theatre is neither acting nor the play, it is not scene nor dance, but it consists of all the elements of which these things are composed: action, which is the very spirit of acting; words, which are the body of the play; line and colour, which are the very heart of the scene; rhythm which is the very essence of dance. ("The Art of the Theatre: The First Dialogue," The Theory of the Modern Stage, ed. Eric Bentley (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968), 113).

Of all these elements, Craig suggests that "perhaps action is the most valuable part." For him the dance is "the father of the dramatist" (115) and while he denies the implication that the poet has a negative influence on the theatre, he distinguishes between a poet and dramatist, making it clear that "the poet is not of the theatre, has never come from the theatre, and cannot be of the theatre." Illustrating from the Renaissance, he declares that while "Hamlet has not the nature of a stage representation," "the masques--the Pageants--were light and beautiful examples of the Art of the Theatre." They were, in fact, "made for the theatre" (116).

Given the right coincidence of temperament and opportunity, the relationship between Yeats and Craig, for all of Yeats's admiration of his contemporary, might well have paralleled that which developed between Jonson and Inigo Jones. Jones, too, emphasized the spectacle, while like Yeats, Jonson stresses the value of poetry: it will last while the spectacle is merely ephemeral. Accordingly, at the opening of the Masque of Blackness (1605), for example, he invites the courtiers to "deface the carcasses" at the end of the performance (Yale ed., 47). This invitation, with its obvious symbolic implications, provides a clear indication of Jonson's view of the superiority of poetry. Much later, in "An Expostulation with Inigo Jones" Jonson rails against the prevailing popularity of Jones's productions:

> O Showes! Showes! Mighty Showes!
> The Eloquence of Masques! What need of prose
> Or Verse, or Sense t'express Imortall you?
> You are the Spectacles of State! 'Tis true
> Court Hieroglyphicks! and all Artes affoord
> In the mere perspective of an Inch board!
> . . . . . .
> Painting and Carpentry are the Soul of Masque!
> Pack with your Pedling Poetry to the Stage!
> This is the money-gett, Mechanick Age!
> (Poems, ed. Johnston, 303-04, ll. 39-52)

Yeats, of course, never rose to such vehemence, nor did he engage in open dispute on the matter, since he too acknowledged the value of other elements of the theatre. None the less, he persistently stressed the primary importance of poetry, and whether or not he deliberately turned to Jonson for guidance, that persistence points to the Jonsonian character of his views.

Yeats's interest in the mixture of poetry and spectacle which the masque provides led to his own experimentation with the form, a fragment of which is now in the Berg Collection, and to his association with a London group called The Masquers. This group which was apparently formed in 1903, about the time that Yeats's Hour-Glass was being staged, also included Arthur Symons, Gilbert Murray, Sturge Moore, Edith Craig (Gordon's sister), and Pamela Coleman Smith. Although it is mentioned in correspondence between Yeats and Sturge Moore (Y & TSM, Letter #6, p. 5 and p. 187n), and in Gerald Fay's The Abbey Theatre (New York: Macmillan, 1958), Joseph Hone provides the fullest description of the group which Fay says was "working on an idea for poetic theatre" (62).

> This society proposed to give performances of 'plays, masques, ballets and ceremonies', with the object of bringing the stage back again to that beauty of appropriate simplicity in the presentation of a play which liberates the attention of an audience for the words of a writer and the movements of an actor. (W. B. Yeats (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971), 194)

However, just as Yeats had been unable to complete his masque, so the group as a whole seemed to find the times unpropitious. Writing to inform Yeats of its dissolution, Gilbert Murray explains: "we found . . . circumstances unfavourable, and thought the attempt at a 'Theatre of Beauty' should be postponed, though we still keep our faith with it" (cited by Hone, 194).

Meanwhile, Yeats's collaboration with many of the Masquers continued through his involvement with The Stage Society which is recorded in letters written between 1902 and 1910, especially from June 1902 to April 1903. In particular, these letters concern the staging by the society of several of Yeats's plays including Where There is Nothing which was discussed in letters of December 1902 and December 1903 and finally produced 26 June 1904 (see L, 382n-383n and also Index under Stage Society). Evidence that Yeats also looked directly to Jonson in those years for guidance in matters of staging, as well as poetry, is provided in his remark in Samhain: 1905 that Robert Gregory's setting for Kincora "was beautiful with a high grave dignity and that strangeness which Ben Jonson thought to be a part of all excellent beauty" (E, 181). Thomas McAlindon points to ll. 568-86, Hymenai [Masque of Hymen] as a source for this remark (164, n. 22) and while he may indeed be correct, it is important to note that Jonson associated beauty with strangeness on other occasions as well. For example, in The Masque of Queens (1609) he remarks on the "strangeness and beauty of the spectacle" (Yale ed., 139). Thus, Yeats's remark may reflect a general knowledge of Jonson's masques, and certainly, a knowledge of the effect Jonson wished to create.

Meanwhile, Yeats was deeply committed to the Irish Theatre Movement. By 1904 Yeats found himself with Lady Gregory and Synge at the helm of an

ambitious theatrical venture, with a new theatre to manage and the challenge of maintaining and teaching rigorous artistic standards in the volatile social and political context of Ireland's awakening nationhood. Jeffares describes his activities at that time:

> The Abbey Theatre opened in December 1904 with a programme of plays by Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory. As producer-manager Yeats was constantly busy, advising the young actors, 'learning the instruments in those early days of producing'. There was no opportunity, had there been the desire, for 'pure' poetry. Many of his friends, especially Maud Gonne and Arthur Symons, regretted this new preoccupation, and blamed Lady Gregory for it. (W. B. Yeats: Man and Poet (2nd ed.; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 147)

Inevitably, the pressures of this new venture placed a distance between Yeats and his London associates and gave a distinctive shape to Yeats's own principles. Doubtless the regret to which Jeffares refers was caused by several factors. Yeats himself noticed that some of his friends could not understand why he had not been "content with lyric writing." The explanation which he offers in his 1906 Preface to Poems: 1899-1905 focuses upon his desire to escape the "outlines of lyric poetry that are blurred with desire and vague regret" in a "search for more of manful energy, more of cheerful acceptance of whatever arises out of the logic of those events, and for clean outline" (VE, 940). As will be demonstrated later, he embarked on a search for a more Jonsonian style in his poetry. Because a radical shift was necessary for the creation of a distinctly modern style it was inevitable that the poet who could make that shift should noticeably diverge from his contemporaries. Yet Yeats never truly abandoned anything. For example, his later remarks confirm that at least one of the masquers kept faith in a 'theatre of beauty.' He borrowed the phrase for the title of a lecture which he delivered at Harvard in 1911 where he describes himself as a "writer of poetic drama

for whom beauty is important":

> To express character, which has a great deal of circumstance, of habit, you require a real environment; some one place, some one moment of time; but in tragedy, which comes from that within us which dissolves away limits, there is a need for surroundings where beauty, decoration, pattern--that is to say, the universal in form--takes the place of accidental circumstance. (Harper's Weekly, 11 November 1911, 11)

He even proposes changes in the shape of the theatre in order "to get either ideal beauty or reality in our stage landscapes" (11). Here then, a re-statement of a distinction made earlier in "The Tragic Theatre" (August 1910) where he writes, somewhat more memorably, that "tragedy must always be a drowning and breaking of the dykes that separate man from man, and it is upon these dykes that comedy keeps house" (E&I, 241). Developing his metaphor, he reveals a concept of comedy shaped in the light of Jonson's comedy of humours and its tradition as descended through Congreve:

> But I was not certain of the site of that house (one always hesitates when there is no testimony but one's own) till somebody told me of a certain letter of Congreve's. He describes the external and superficial expressions of 'humor' on which farce is founded and then defines 'humour' itself--the foundation of comedy--as a 'singular and unavoidable way of doing anything peculiar to one man only, by which his speech and actions are distinguished from all other men', and adds to it that 'passions are too powerful in the sex to let humour have its course.' (E&I, 241)[11]

In spite of their differences the fundamental similarity between these two passages illustrates how apparently unrelated influences ultimately contributed to the articulation of essentially the same idea. That is, while Yeats's interest in the masque and the activities of his 'ondon friends undoubtedly contributed to the expression of his 1911 lecture, his experience at the Abbey where the comedies of his friends were produced (VE, 850), directed him to the comedies of Jonson which provided him with a means of distinguishing their art from his own.

In fact, there is little evidence that Yeats's own plays were themselves influenced by Jonson's comedies. As he notes, "I write of the tragic stories told over the fire by people who are in the comedies of my friends" (VE, 850). The Green Helmet, however, is an exception. Published in 1910 along with poems in which Jonson's influence is clearly evident, its characters, at least in the eyes of S. B. Bushrui, have a "Jonsonian element" which makes them "more crude and realistic":

> Their jealousies, their petty quarrels, their extravagance and conceit, add greatly to the quality of life Yeats so assiduously sought after; he is now more than ever concentrating on 'the roots as it were of all the faculties necessary for life.' (208)

Because The Green Helmet appeared with poems in which Jonson's influence is so apparent, its Jonsonian character will be mentioned again at a later point. Similarly, other possible reminiscences of Jonson's plays will be considered in conjunction with Jonson's influence, as a poet, on Yeats's poetry. Moreover, it is apparent from Yeats's remarks in his 1906 Preface, particularly his description of the comedy of his friends, "the extravagance, the joyous irony, the far-flying phantasy, the aristocratic gaiety, the resounding and rushing words of the comedy of the countryside" (VE, 850), that although Yeats recognized the genius of Jonson's comedy, he realized that it was not his own. Synge's admiration for Jonson--the best plays of Ben Jonson and Molière can no more go out of fashion than blackberries on the hedges" (Preface to The Tinker's Wedding)--undoubtedly did not pass unnoticed. It is highly possible that in this, as in other aspects of his life and work, Synge did what Yeats himself could not do. That is, Yeats did not write Jonsonian comedy, not because he did not like it, but because he recognized that others around him could do it better.[12]

Indeed, it is highly probable that Jonson's theatrical works were less important to Yeats as sources of technical methods than for what they taught him about the relation of the poet-playwright to his audience, as well as what he learned about the nature of the audience itself. Certainly his interest in Jonson's plays, including Poetaster and Cynthia's Revels, stemmed from his own frustration with the Irish public and the parallel which he discerned between his own situation and Jonson's. Similarly, he seems to have been concerned about the context in which Jonson's masques had been presented. Indeed, his very first reference to those masques is a most important indicator of the nature of their significance:

> The audiences that loved Ben Jonson's Masks, Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois or the love scenes of Old Fortunatus would have wished for more numerous set passages of poetic oratory, and more audacious metaphors; the Victorian public, on the other hand, by the mouth of a morning paper accustomed to pronounce its mandates, asks for more 'matter of fact' conversations. (LNI, 216)

In 1891, then, Yeats regarded the Renaissance as an ideal time which could serve as a model for his own age. By 1906, however, when he came to inquire about the people to whom Jonson's plays were dedicated and the ladies who participated in his masques, Yeats was surely aware of the complex combination of actual and ideal which characterized the Renaissance.

Jonson's dedications are revealing, not only because of what they contain, but also because of Jonson's choice of patrons. Briefly, it may be noted that he dedicated his plays to three distinct groups--individuals, institutions and then simply, the reader--which in themselves reveal much about Jonson. Aside from his beloved teacher, Camden, the individuals he chose had power and position at court. They include Richard Martin;

Esme; Lord Aubigny; Sir Francis Stuart; Lady Mary Wroth; and the Earl of Pembroke. These dedications chronicle his stormy career at court as well as his growing disillusionment. For example, in 1610 he sent Catiline to William, Earl of Pembroke with the following remarks:

> My Lord,--In so thick and darke an ignorance, as now almost covers the age, I crave leave to stand neare your light: and, by that, to bee read. Posteritie may pay our benefit the honor & thanks: when it shall know, that you dare, in these jig-given times, to countenance a legitimate Poeme. I must call it so, against all noise of opinion; from those crude and ayrie reports, I appeale to the great and singular faculty of judgement in your Lordship, able to vindicate truth from error. . . . (H & S, V, 431)

By contrast, his earlier dedications to institutions, including the Inns of Court, the Court itself and the two Universities, are testimonies to his fervent belief in their ability to function as they were meant to. In particular, his Dedication to the court at the front of Cynthia's Revels which so answered Yeats's needs in The Bounty of Sweden, reveals that in spite of the difficulties Jonson encountered there, he still retained a vision of its ideal form--"Thou art a beautiful and brave spring. . . ."

Finally, his late practice of dedicating his works to the reader indicates his growing alientation from court. It also reveals, as no words to a patron looking for respect if not praise or downright flattery could, how passionately Jonson distinguished between those qualified to judge his work and those who were not. His second dedication of Catiline, "To the reader in ordinary," provides a further indication of what he thought of his audience in what he calls "these jig-given times":

> The Muses forbid that I should restrayn your meddling. . . . I departed with my right, when I let it first abroad. And, now, so secure an Interpreter I am of my chance, that neither praise, nor dispraise from you can affect mee. Though you commend the first two Actes, with the people, because they are the worst; and dislike the Oration of Cicero, in regard you read some pieces of it at Schoole, and understand them not yet; I shall finde the way to forgive you. . . . The commendation of good things may fall within a many, their approbation but in a few; for the most commend out of affection, selfe tickling, an easinesse, or imitation: but men judge only out of knowledge. That is the trying faculty. And, to those works that will beare a Judge, nothing is more dangerous than a foolish prayse. You will say, I shall not have yours therfore; but rather the contrary, all vexation of Censure. If I were not above such molestations now, I had great cause to think unworthily of my studies, or they had so of mee. But I leave to you exercise. Beginne. (H & S, V, 432)

His bitterness is fully apparent in his final dedication. "To the reader extraordinary"--"You I would understand to be the better man, though places in court go otherwise. . . ."

Although--or perhaps because--he had called judgement "a great and singular faculty," Jonson found little evidence of it in the men around him. In theory, he frankly wrote for an elite audience. In practice, he was forced to recognize that social institutions devised by men, and courtiers who were socially superior only through accident of birth or favour, could not or would not match the ideals projected upon them. His need to turn to an anonymous element in society who might be capable of appreciating his work--"if thou canst but spell, and join my sense," he writes in his dedication to The New Inn, "there is more hope of thee, than of a hundred fastidious impertinents" (H & S, VI, 397)--is just one indication that seventeenth-century English society was not the homogeneous entity which Yeats had pictured in "A Poetic Drama." Indeed, the break up of that society meant that Jonson's audience possessed many characteristics shared by Yeats's three hundred years later so that Jonson, like Yeats, had also been forced to address the problem of finding an appropriate audience.

However, while Jonson's plays largely thrived on the tension between the actual and the ideal, his masques were intended as presentations of the ideal. The masque was a phenomenon of the late Renaissance which was introduced into the English court in the 1590's and survived until approximately 1640. Originally devised as an elaborate expression of living ideals, the masque as a whole became an even more complex blend of theatre, dance and spectacle with the introduction of the anti-masque in 1609. Although responsive to social and artistic developments, that complexity ultimately brought an end to its popularity. Even though many reasons have been given for ultimate demise of the masque, Yeats's description of Spenser as one who could not be content to be "a Master of Revels to mankind" but also had to reflect the bitterness and abstraction of the new and strengthening order (E&I, 368) might be used to characterize the atmosphere which fostered yet did not sustain the masque. Undoubtedly what attracted Yeats to the form was the unique opportunity which it afforded for the assimilation of the audience into its art. Enid Welsford notes that "from the beginning to the end of its history, the essence of the masque was the arrival of certain persons vizored and diguised to present an offering" (The Court Masque: A Study in the Relationship Between Poetry and The Revels (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 3).
Eventually, these masquers were of noble birth. That is, they were members of their own audience whose performance was about the court they entertained and who were finally joined by their onlookers for the closing revels. As Stephen Orgel comments in his Introduction to the Yale edition of Jonson's masques, "Every masque concluded by merging the spectator with the masquer, in effect transforming the courtly audience into the idealized world of the poet's vision" (2), or, as Welsford suggests, the event made

contemporary spectators feel that not just the masque, but also the society that gave rise to it, had become a work of art (273).

More specifically, possibly the chief value of the masque lay in its ability to assert the homogeneity of the artist's vision with that of the gathered company, the society which constituted its audience. Moreover, this homogeneity was the result of a mutual exchange. The masque allowed Jonson to give shape and significance to the society of his day through the development of a form that was both part of the society from which it sprang, and connected to the ideals or superhuman powers from which that significance descended. Under Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones masques became regular events at court and, later in the houses of aristocracy, where, for example, Comus was first performed. Eventually, even royalty participated. Jonson's Preface to The Masque of Queens (1609) illustrates how this involvement of members of the highest social standing completed the exchange between artist and his society by governing his composition and, ultimately, helping to shape the masque in general:

> It is increasing now to the third time of my being used in these services to her majesties personal presentations, with the ladies whom she pleaseth to honour, it was my first and special regard to see that the nobility of the invention should be answerable to the dignity of their persons. For which reason I chose the argument to be a celebration of honorable and true fame bred out of virtue. . . . (Yale ed., 122)

Thus, when Yeats requested information regarding the ladies who took part in Jonson's masques he focused upon the most distinct characteristic of those masques, the factor which determined their shape and content and which ensured that the poet, audience and participants would all share in the same artistic vision. Here, then, in the theory of the masque lay the ideal which Yeats discerned as early as 1891 and continued to seek in actuality up to the end of his career.

And although the mixture of artistic elements--music, dance, spectacle and poetry--which constituted a Renaissance masque undoubtedly contributed to Yeats's later appreciation of ceremony and dance in art and life, the unique opportunity which the masque offers for the assimilation of the audience into the art form, and thus, into the ceremony which the poet has stylized from life, was almost surely the most important aspect of the masque in Yeats's eyes. As early as 1919 in "A People's Theatre," he describes the kind of theatre he wished to create:

> I want to create for myself an unpopular theatre and an audience like a secret society where admission is by favour and never to many. Perhaps I shall never create it, for you and I and Synge have had to dig the stone for our statues and I am aghast at the sight of a new quarry, and besides I want so much--an audience of fifty, a room worthy of it (some great dining room or drawing room), half-a-dozen young men and women who can dance and speak verse or play drum and flute and zither, and all the while, instead of a profession, I offer them 'an accomplishment.' (E, 254-55)

Here in these remarks so similar to those later made famous by the Old Man in Death of Cuchulain, Yeats is not offering a masque, but his own Four Plays for Dancers which although immediately inspired by Nōh drama, none the less share characteristics with what might be termed Jonson's Renaissance 'accomplishments.' In addition to its artistic elements, Yeats envisions that his ideal theatre will also share the exchange between audience and actor/participant which had characterized the masque. "A man who loves verse and the visible arts," he writes, "has, in a work such as I imagined, the advantage of the professional player. The professional player becomes the amateur, the other has been preparing all his life . . ." (256). Finally, while Jonson prepared his masques for a highly select social aristocracy, Yeats envisions that he will write for, indeed create, a similarly exclusive

audience: "I want to make, or to help some man some day to make, a feeling of exclusiveness, a bond among chosen spirits, a mystery almost for leisured and lettered people." Or, as he typically concludes, "I seek, not a theatre but the theatre's anti-self" (257). Undoubtedly, Jonson's masques served as a model for that 'anti-self.'

Years later in his 1933 Introduction to Letters to the New Island he refers to the homogeneity between actor and audience again, recalling that two or three times in the past he had discovered that a highly cultivated man or woman can in certain kinds of drama surpass an actor who is in all things save culture his superior. Actor and audience may still be differentiated, but clearly, the audience must surpass, or at least equal the actor, if the theatrical experience is to be successful (viii). That is, Yeats, like Jonson, held that the artist must always be able to trust the capacity of his audience. As early as Part of the Kings Entertainment, in passing to his Coronation, Jonson distinguishes between "the sharpe and learned" and "the multitude" whose "grounded judgements did gaze, said it was fine, and were satisfied" (H & S, VII, 91). Much later, he makes a similar distinction in his description of the entrance of the hags in "the spectacle of strangeness" that is part of The Masque of Queens:

> For to have made themselves their own decipherers, and each one to have been told upon their entrance what they were and whether they would, had been a most piteous hearing, and utterly unworthy any quality of a poem, wherein a writer should always trust somewhat to the capacity of the spectator, especially at these spectacles, where men, beside inquiring eyes, are understood to bring quick ears, and not those sluggish ones of porters and mechanics that must be bored through at every act with narrations. (Yale ed., 125)

Finally, in the Dedication to The New Inn, where he abandoned all attempt at courtly compliment, addressing his remarks simply "To the reader," he rails against the aristocratic counterparts of those "sluggish porters and mechanics." Indeed, he writes that he would rather trust himself and his book to the plain reader's "rusticke candor" than to all the "pomp . . . of pride, and solemn ignorance" of the fastidious impertinents at court: To the reader,

> If thou bee such, I make thee my Patron, and dedicate the Piece to thee: If not so much, would I had beene at the charge of thy better literature. How-so-ever, if thou canst but spell, and joine my sense; there is more hope of thee, than of a hundred fastidious impertinents, who were there present the first day, yet never made piece of their prospect the right way. What did they come for, then? thou wilt ask me. I will as punctually answer: To see, and to bee seene. To make a generall muster of themselves in their clothes of credit: and possesse the Stage, against the Play. To dislike all, but marke nothing. And by their confidence of rising between the Actes, in oblique lines, make affidavit to the whole house, of their not understanding one Scene. Arm'd with this prejudice, as the Stage-furniture or Arras-clothes, they were there, as Spectators, away. For the faces in the hangings, and they beheld alike. So I wish, they may do ever; and doe trust myselfe, and my Booke, rather to thy rusticke candor, than all the pompe of their pride, and solemne ignorance to boote. Fare thee well, and fall to. Read. (H & S, VI, 397)

Yeats's hopes for an ideal audience were also disappointed. The sentiments expressed in the Old Man's speech at the opening of The Death of Cuchulain are not unlike those of Jonson's various descriptions of his audience. Yeats's people, "educating themselves out of the Book Societies and like, sciolists all, pickpockets and opinionated bitches" are his equivalent to Jonson's "dull mechanics" and "fastidious impertinents" (CPI, 693-94).[13] Thus by fashioning his version of Jonson's dedications more than thirty years after he first expressed an interest in them, Yeats confirmed his long-standing concern for the quality of his audience.

Throughout the years that concern had manifested itself not only in such direct pronouncements on the nature of his audience, but also in the critical stance which is apparent in much of his literary analysis. For example, such a stance is of crucial importance in "At Stratford-on-Avon" (1901) and "Edmund Spenser" (1902) as well as later contributions to Samhain, The Arrow and other publications. In particular, it is apparent in "The Controversy over The Playboy of the Western World" from The Arrow (1907) where he states that

> in the great days of English dramatic art the greatest English writer of comedy was free to create The Alchemist and Volpone, but a demand born of a Puritan conviction and shopkeeping timidity and insincerity, for what many second-rate intellects thought to be noble and elevating events and characters, had already at the outset of the eighteenth century ended English drama as a complete and serious art. (E, 225)

Essentially, that stance is derived from the assumption that the responsibility for the production of good literature, including drama, falls on both the poet and his audience. Indeed, Yeats's literary criticism was deeply rooted in a criticism of the society in which poets, dramatists and other creative people live. Thus, as early as 1891 he had isolated the challenge which he was to continue to face throughout his career which, fundamentally, stemmed from his recognition that the modern period is not a great age for literature, because poets and playwrights are not esteemed by all members of the community as he imagined they had been in the Renaissance, and because modern audiences neither demand nor respond to high artistic standards.

In 1891 Yeats had not yet confronted the implications of his social criticism or faced the problems posed by an appeal to what is really an elite, 'aristocratic' audience in the twentieth century. One of his major considerations at that early date was the creation of an audience for good literature in Ireland and it was only after his nationalist

aspirations became assimilated with other concerns that he directed attention to the fundamental question of the poet's relation to his society. Indeed, that question continued to haunt Yeats to the end of his career. It is finally present behind the Old Man's opening speech in The Death of Cuchulain where it is apparent that circumstances have forced him to accommodate a bitter reality:

> I wanted an audience of fifty or a hundred, and if there are more, I beg them not to shuffle their feet or talk when the actors are speaking. I am sure that as I am producing a play for people I like, it is not probable, in this vile age, that they will be more in number than those who listened to the first performance of Milton's Comus. On the present occasion they must know the old epics and Mr. Yeats's plays about them; such people, however poor, have libraries of their own. If there are more than a hundred I won't be able to escape people who are educating themselves out of the Book Societies and the like, sciolists all, pick-pockets and opinionated bitches. (CPI, 693-94)

What follows is not a masque but an enactment of the modern destruction of values. In theme, more anti-masque than masque, The Death of Cuchulain speaks fully only to that select group who, largely as readers, have been part of Yeats's life-long audience. Paradoxically, those who read or hear the Old Man's Introduction meet the requirement which Yeats set down for his audience: they have knowledge of "the old epics and Mr. Yeats's plays about them." By following Yeats's career they have denied complete victory to "this vile age." Indeed, it is as though Yeats planned his career with that end in view. He so mythologized his life that he built his own version of his Renaissance ideal. But the vile age must have its victory too. In the end Yeats left his achievement, but his final words went to a harlot and a beggar-man. It is true that he imagined much; yet

> . . . an old man looking back on life
> Imagines it in scorn. (CPI, 705)

Yeats left only the things men "adore and loathe" ("Their sole reality?") (CPI, 704). "The flesh my flesh has gripped," as the harlot sang. He left it to a succeeding generation to make what it could from what remained to it.

Thus, the events which filled the years between Letters to the New Island and The Death of Cuchulain taught Yeats much about what happens to ideals in the modern age. Yeats's choice of the Renaissance as the age which could embody his ideal and also provide a mask for the modern remained a valid one for him, just as his choice of Jonson as an exemplum proved to be unerring. The lessons to be learned from Jonson's career aptly applied to the problems which Yeats continued to face. Moreover, because of parallels in the lives and works of both poets, and because of Yeats's early interest in him, Jonson remained a constant influence on Yeats's response to those problems.

2. Prose

Earliest indications of the nature of Jonson's ultimate importance to Yeats appear in Yeats's prose through the eighteen-nineties to the end of the Samhain period. Although the extent to which Yeats was then familiar with Jonson's prose can not now be determined, several factors point to the probability that he knew it well and deliberately fashioned his own in the light of that knowledge.

First, although Timber; or Discoveries was generally available in Gifford's edition, it is highly possible that Yeats's attention was directed to Jonson's work by the appearance of Swinburne's Study of Ben Jonson in 1889 which, in the words of its modern editor, Howard B. Norland, "probably did more than any other single work to return the satiric genius of the seventeenth century to critical prominence and ultimately to a long overdue re-evaluation."[14] But that re-evaluation extended beyond Jonson's satiric works. For example, Swinburne's praise of Timber; or Discoveries is lavish, "if all his plays were lost to us, the author of Ben Jonson's Explorata, or Discoveries, would yet retain a seat among English prose-writers . . . (93-94)," even extravagant, "a single leaf of [Jonson's] Discoveries is worth all his lyrics, tragedies, elegies and epigrams together (124)." Indeed, Herford and Simpson have suggested that after such praise, Timber; or Discoveries was regarded as "a literary revelation" (IX, 159). They note that after Swinburne's study, Jonson's work went through several editions, including those edited by Henry Morley (Cassells National Library, Vol. 169, 1889), F.E. Schelling (1892), Sir Israel Gollancz (Temple Classics, 1898), and Maurice Castelain (1906).

The latter is expecially noteworthy since it appeared in the same year as Yeats's letter to Bullen and his adoption of Jonson's title for his own series of essays. Moreover since Yeats seems to have had a keen interest in contemporary editions of Renaissance authors, as illustrated in his letter to Bullen and elsewhere, it is highly unlikely that he failed to note this general resurgence of interest in Jonson, and especially in his prose.

Second, this resurgence came at an appropriate point in Yeats's career, between his earlier, self-confessed interest in The Sad Shepherd and the later Green Helmet-Responsibilities period which closes with the invocation of Jonson's name in the tailpiece. Given the nature of that later poetry, with its many Jonsonian characteristics, it is not at all surprising that the principles on which it is based should bear a marked resemblance to the principles set down in Timber; or Discoveries centuries earlier. In addition, this early prose provides a glimpse of Yeats as teacher and adviser, revealing one facet of a Jonsonian personality that would later be complemented by his identification with Jonson as social satirist and idealist.

Yeats's early assessment of Jonson undoubtedly stopped somewhat short of Swinburne's enthusiastic praise. None the less, Yeats's recognition of his worth is implicit both in his own expression of similar principles and in his deliberate appropriation of Jonson's title. A review of those principles, formed largely in response to the requirements of the Irish theatre and, more generally, the need for an Irish Literature, reveals that increasingly, Yeats shared Jonson's concern for language as a means for public communication--not private symbol--for craftsmanship, tradition and social responsibility.

Indeed, Yeats's idea of the poet and his function clearly belongs within the tradition transmitted through Jonson's Timber; or Discoveries. His attempts to advise others often suggest Jonson's direct influence. For example, Jonson's distinction between "a Rymer, and a Poet" (2447ff) appears to be echoed in Yeats's reaction to a letter from a young Irish poet in the early nineties ("Hopes and Fears for Irish Literature," United Ireland, 15 October 1892). While Jonson declares that

> the common Rymers powre forth Verses, such as they are, (ex tempore) but there never come(s) from them one Sense, worth the life of a Day. A Rymer, and a Poet, are two things. . . . I have met many of these Rattles, that made a noyse, and buz'de. They had their humme; and, no more. Indeed, things, wrote with labour, deserve to be so read, and will last their Age (2447-66),

Yeats, also stressing the need to work carefully and slowly to create poetry of enduring value, reports:

> I have before me a letter from a young man in a remote part of Ireland asking an opinion about some verses and telling me, as if it were a special merit, that he did them at great speed, two columns in an hour, I think. I have not yet read his poems; but it is obvious that good poetry cannot be done in this fashion. . . . He who would write a memorable song must be ready to give often days to a few lines, and be ready, perhaps, to pay for it afterwards with certain other days of dire exhaustion and depression, and, if he would be remembered when he is in his grave, he must give to his art the devotion the Crusaders of old gave to their cause. . . . (UP, I, 249)

Some months later, in a lecture entitled "Nationality and Literature" (reprinted in United Ireland, 27 May 1893) Yeats outlined a programme for Irish literature which provides further evidence of his kinship with Ben Jonson. In Timber; or Discoveries Jonson declares Nature, Exercise, Imitation, Study and Art to be the requisites of a poet (2409-2504), and, just as he notes that what is especially required of the poet is "an exactnesse of Studie, and multiplicity of reading, which maketh a full man" (2483-84), so Yeats advises his countrymen to learn from the writers

of other countries:

> We must study them constantly and learn from them the secret of their greatness. Only by study of the great models can we acquire style. . . . We must learn, too, . . . to make literature almost the most serious thing in our lives if we would understand it properly, and quite the most serious thing if we could write it well. (UP, I, 274)

Similarly, while Jonson warns the young writer not to think "hee can leape forth suddainely a Poet, by dreaming hee hath been in Parnassus, or having washt his lipps . . . in Helicon"; since, as he continues, "there goes more to his making. For to Nature, Exercise, Imitation and Studie, Art must bee added, to make all these perfect" (2488-93), so Yeats cautions that "the inspiration of God . . . comes only to him who labours at rhythm and cadence, at form and style. . . . We must learn . . . to be supreme artists and then God will send to us supreme inspiration" (UP, I, 274). Although Yeats is quite clearly a modern poet, especially, as will be seen presently, with regard to the role of imitation in modern poetry, it is certain that, admitting the power of inspiration, but emphasizing the need for study, labour and craftsmanship, he belongs within the classical tradition transmitted through Jonson's Timber; or Discoveries.

Meanwhile, it is important to emphasize that although he directed his remarks to countrymen who were striving to create an 'Irish' literature, Yeats was convinced that they would fail to create the audience they needed if they restricted themselves to patriotic subject matter and persisted in attempts to revive Gaelic. They must, he writes in his 1889 Preface to the Book of Irish Verse, seek "the manner of the greatest poetry" (xxviii) and carry on "the traditions of good literature which are the morality of the man of letters" (xiv). That is, they must create a literature whose excellence could be measured by international standards.

Thus, even at the height of his early involvement in Irish politics, as the Irish theatre movement was about to be launched in earnest, Yeats remained committed to traditions which transcended national boundaries and connected him to the deepest roots of his heritage as an English-speaking poet.

Among the most fundamental indicators of the extent to which Yeats responded to the influence of Jonson's literary theory is his emphasis on language as a means of communication, and his insistence on maintaining a vital relationship between speech and the written word, preserving what Yeats refers to as "a living language." Lady Gregory's description of Yeats in 1899 as "pre-eminently a poet" for whom "words and the ordering of words are always the chief care and delight" (Beltaine, 2 (February 1900), 27) brings to mind Jonson's enumeration of the three "Necessaries" for writing well:

> For a man to write well, there are required three Necessaries. To reade the best Authors, observe the best Speakers: and much exercise of his owne style. In style to consider, what ought to be written; and after what manner; Hee must first thinke, and excogitate his matter; then choose his words, and examine the weight of either. Then take care in placing, and ranking both matter, and words, that the composition be comely. . . . (1697-1704)

However, before attempting to compare Yeats's observations on the function of language in poetry and society in general, it is necessary to distinguish between seventeenth- and nineteenth-century expectations of language. For Jonson writing in the seventeenth century, language reveals the order of God. More specifically its usage measures the extent to which that order has been perceived by man:

> The conceits of the mind are Pictures of things, and the tongue is the Interpreter of those Pictures. The order of Gods creatures in themselves, is not only admirable and glorious, but eloquent; Then he who could apprehend the consequence of things in their truth, and utter his apprehensions as truly, were the best Writer, or Speaker. . . . The shame of speaking unskilfully were small, if the tongue onely thereby were disgrac'd: But as the Image of a King, in his Seale ill-represented, is not so much a blemish to the waxe, or the Signet that seal'd it, as to the Prince it representeth; so disordered speech is not so much injury to the lips that give it forth, as to the disproportion, and incoherence of things in themselves, so negligently expressed. Neither can his mind be thought to be in tune whose words doe jarre; nor his reason in frame. . . . (2125-44)

Attention to language is thus a moral responsibility which distinguishes men from all other creatures: "Speech is the only benefit man hath to expresse his excellencie of mind above other creatures. It is the instrument of Society" (1881-83). In a correspondent and ordered universe, the achievement of order in language is more than a stylistic accomplishment. It is also the fulfillment of responsibility to principles of personal, social and divine order.

By contrast, Yeats and other moderns have no objective order to reveal. Indeed, their principal responsibility is the creation of order, coherence and proportion through language. In addition, it is their particular dilemma that the order which they create will be a subjective order which must be made accessible to others, largely through language. Thus, an examination of the language used by the modern poet provides a measure of the order and coherence which he has been able to create in an apparently meaningless universe. But to make that order accessible his language must not merely serve a private symoblism, it must be given public significance which, in this modern age, is available from two sources: tradition and experience. Thus, even though the order which provided a context for Jonson's remarks on language is no longer valid, his remarks still provide a tradition for the use of language which can

direct the modern poet in his attempt to use language to reveal the visible and still viable part of that order, that which concerns the activities of man. The following passages from Jonson's Timber, or Discoveries may thus be favourably compared with remarks from Samhain:

> In all speech, words and sense, are as the body, and the soule. The sense is as the life and soule of Language, without which all words are dead. Sense is wrought out of experience, the knowledge of humane life, and actions, or of the liberall Arts. . . . Words are the Peoples; yet there is a choise of them to be made. . . . They are to be chose according to the persons wee make speake, or the things wee speake of (1884-93);
>
> Language most shewes a man: speake that I may see thee. (2031-32)

Similarly, throughout Samhain Yeats reminded fellow poets and playwrights that language reveals the man and that they must work to make their language appropriate to their subject. Indeed, because of its connection to the social, political and literary difficulties of the day, he tended to see many of the problems and solutions which he and his countrymen faced in terms of language. In Samhain: 1901, for example, he sees that it was difficult for poor uneducated Irishmen to write in English, "a language which has long been separated from the 'folk-speech'" (E, 82-83). He also points to linguistic problems faced by the Irish because of their political situation: "We who write in English have a more difficult work, for English has been the language in which the Irish cause has been debated; and we have to struggle with traditional phrases and traditional points of view" (104). He condemns both "the base idioms of the newspapers" (95) and "a schoolmaster's ideal of correctness" (94), much as Jonson warns of the twin dangers of "a barbarous phrase" (1771) or language determined by "vulgar Custome" (1939) and "the extreame anxieties, and foolish cavils ofGrammarians" (1860-61). He

loves "pure and neat Language . . ., yet plaine and customary" (1870). Indeed, for him, the best language is determined by custom, or what he called the "consent of the Learned" (1943):

> Custome is the most certaine Mistresse of Language, as the publicke stampe makes the current money. But wee must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coyning. Nor fetch words from the extreme and utmost ages; since the chiefe vertue of a style is perspicuite. . . . The eldest of the present, and newest of the past Language is the best. (1926-36)

Taking up Jonson's terminology, but applying it to some ideal period before "the change that followed the Renaissance" that has been completed by "newspaper government and the scientific movement," Yeats speculates in Samhain: 1904 on the development of language in "the old world" where men produced a literature whose greatness can not now be equalled:

> Everything that their minds ran on came on them vivid with the colour of the senses, and when they wrote it was out of their own rich experience, and they found their symbols of expression in things that they had known of all their life long. Their very words were more vigorous than ours, for their phrases came from a common mint, from a market, or the tavern, or from the great poets of a still older time. (148-49)

Yeats thus describes the ideal which stands behind Jonson's remarks, while his objection to the "abstract generalisations" which have subsequently entered the language provides a reason why Jonson's warning "not to be too frequent with the mint" ought to be heeded.

Indeed Yeats, like Jonson, repeatedly emphasized the literary value of a vital language which ultimately can be derived only from the kind of ideal society described in Samhain: 1904. For Jonson, the sense of language must be "wrought out of experience, the knowledge of humane life, and actions" (1887-88). Written language is clearly derived from human speech which reflects its speaker, "speake that I may see thee"

(2031-32). "Good literature," Yeats writes in 1902, must be founded "on a living speech" (94):

> Let us get back in everything to the spoken word . . ., for . . . we have begun to forget that most literature is but recorded speech, and even where we write with care, we have begun 'to write with elaboration that could never be spoken.' (95)

To prove his point, Yeats proposes that every child in Ireland be asked to turn a newspaper article or a piece of "what is called excellent English" into country idiom which, of all modern languages, most retained the characteristics of Yeats's ideal. He speculates that the experiment will prove his point and reveal at once "the difference between dead and living words, between words that meant something years ago and words that have the only thing that gives literary quality--personality, the breath of men's mouths" (95).

Yeats's own search for such words was itself carried out in a Jonsonian manner. While Jonson advocates the use of language that "shall not fly humanity" (776) and advises poets to choose words with care "according to the persons we make speak, or the things we speak of . . ." (1893-94), Yeats warns fellow writers that they "must be able to make a king of Faery or an old countryman or a modern lover speak that language which is his and nobody else's" (108). In addition, although much of Yeats's advice in this essay from Samhain: 1903 similarly concerns the language, it also embraces other matters of style and practice which had concerned Jonson as well. Again, that advice is expressed in language which seems to echo passages from Jonson's Timber; or Discoveries. In fact, "The Reform of the Theatre" contains so many remarks which may be regarded as adaptations from Jonson's Timber; or Discoveries as to suggest that its composition was directly influenced by Yeats's recollection

of Jonson's work. It includes, for example, the suggestion that both writers and their audiences must acquire "a stronger feeling for beautiful and appropriate language" (107), the admonition that words which contribute to a sense of style are not those "with an air of literature about them, what is ordinarily called eloquent writing" but those which are appropriate to their speaker (107-08), and the warning that if playwrights "are not in love with words," their work will "lack the delicate movement of living speech that is the chief garment of life" (108). Indeed, Yeats's second major reform of the theatre of his day, specifically designed to "restore words to their sovereignty" on stage, is to "make speech even more important than gesture," a recommendation which Jonson would surely have approved, especially in view of his own dispute with Inigo Jones.

Moreover, both Jonson and Yeats invoke an analogy between man's speech and his body to describe the poet's use of both language and style. Having declared that "Language most shewes a man," Jonson develops his analogy in some detail:

> No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech. Nay, it is likened to a man; and as we consider feature, and composition in a man; so words in Language: in the greatnesse, aptnesse, sound, structure, and harmony of it. Some men are tall, and bigge, so some Language is high and great. . . . (2033-39)

Similarly, style ought to be "strong and manly" (699), even as poets ought to strive for "manly composition" (797), avoiding "effeminate Phrase" (798-99). Echoing Jonson, Yeats declares that "an art is always at its greatest when it is most human" (110), and proceeds to advise that "one must always be certain that the work of art as a whole, is masculine and intellectual in sound as in form" (109). Some years later, observing in Samhain: 1906 that modern literature is "monotonous in its structure and effeminate in its continual insistence upon certain moments of

strained lyricism," Yeats remarks that every rewriting of a play, either in prose or verse, that has succeeded on the stage has been "an addition to the masculine element, an increase of strength in the bony structure" (220). Finally, both Jonson and Yeats condemn art that, worse than effeminate, is of the surface only. Just as Jonson notes the deficiency of those who "labour onely to ostentation; and are ever more busie about the colours, and surface of a worke, then in the matter, and foundation" (691-93), so Yeats denounces an art of the theatre which "smothers" voice and movement "with bad painting, with innumerable garish colours, and with continual mimicries of the surface of life" as "an art of fading humanity, a decaying art" (110).

Meanwhile, even as Jonson stresses the importance of the "foundation" of a work, so, midway through this essay on the reform of the theatre, Yeats reminds fellow writers that if they do not know how to "construct," "to arrange much complicated life into a single action" (108), their work will not linger in the memory. His remarks echo an earlier Samhain, where he urges his fellows to "learn construction from the masters," and where his subsequent reference to a fragment of Shakespeare's conversation recalled, he thinks "from Ben Jonson's Underwoods," makes it highly probable that Jonson is one of those masters (Samhain: 1901 in E, 81). Certainly Jonson emphasizes the importance of construction on more than one occasion. Later, in Timber; or Discoveries, for example, he defines a Fable as

> the Imitation of one intire, and perfect Action; whose parts are so joyned, and knitt together, as nothing in the structure can be chang'd, or taken away, without impairing, or troubling the whole; of which there is a proportionable magnitude in the members. (2681-86)

Some lines later he repeats the principle:

> Now, in every Action it behooves the Poet to know which is his utmost bound, how farre with fitnesse, and a necessary proportion, he may produce, and determine it. . . . For, as a body without proportion cannot be goodly, no more can the Action, either in Comedy, or Tragedy, without his fit bounds. (2735-41)

Undoubtedly such references to a proportioned body suggest Yeats's best-known definition of Unity of Being. Indeed, Yeats's emphasis on the arrangement of life into a single form points to the kind of stylistic reduction towards harmony and proportion which was necessary for the poetic realization of his ideal. Thus, his desire for an appropriate language is also related to his quest for unity. His later declaration in Discoveries, that men "should ascend out of common interests, the thoughts of the newspapers, of the market place, of men of science, but only so far as we can carry the normal, passionate, reasoning self, the personality as a whole (E & I, 272)," is quite possibly an outgrowth of his observations on language in Samhain, where he rejects the language of schoolmasters and newspapers in pursuit of words with "personality, the breath of men's mouths" (E, 94, 95). Moreover, Yeats's 'normal self' which includes passion and reason, yet shuns their extremes, may be equated with that part of Jonson which sought fitness and proportion in all things and preferred 'middle' words "of a just stature" (2144-45). Indeed, the word "normal" points to the importance of Jonson's influence on the formulation of this passage which has been regarded almost exclusively as evidence of Yeats's adaptation of the idea behind Donne's 'body thought' from The Second Anniversary. That importance is even more understandable in view of the fact that Yeats's favourite lines from Poetaster, itself a favourite and cited elsewhere in Discoveries, include Jonson's equivalent

to Donne's description of Elizabeth Drury--"You both have vertues shining through your shapes" (V, i, 13). Although Donne's phrase almost surely contributed to this and other similar passages in Yeats's Discoveries, especially to the title "The Thinking of the Body," Yeats's insistence on the normality of the whole man distinctively connects this remark to the influence of Ben Jonson who typically perceived and preferred the middle ground and whose version of the same commonplace also attracted Yeats's attention.

These remarks in Samhain, then, are among the first indications of the importance of form in Yeats's concept of wholeness. Later comments reveal that his desire for construction in drama was but one manifestation of a more fundamental appreciation of form in art:

> . . . it is not that delight in beauty which tells the artist that he has imagined what may never die, itself but a delight in the permanent yet ever-changing form of life, in her very limbs and lineaments? (152-53);
>
> A feeling for the form of life, for the graciousness of life, for the noble dignity of life, for the moving limbs of life, for the nobleness of life, for all that cannot be written in codes, has always been greatest among the gifts of literature to mankind. (162)

These remarks, which anticipate Yeats's later description of Coole as a place where "life moves without restraint through spacious forms" (Memoirs, 226), may be connected both to traditional principles transmitted through Renaissance works like Jonson's Timber, or Discoveries, and to modern needs which can not be satisfactorily accommodated by traditional definitions. Yeats cannot, for example, urge fellow writers to seek the "fit bounds" of comedy or tragedy. Such objective standards of decorum no longer have validity. Instead, he must direct them towards a much more elusive and highly subjective ideal, "the form of life":

> What attracts me to drama is that it is, in the most obvious way, what all the arts are upon a last analysis. A farce and a tragedy are alike in this, that they are a moment of intense life. An action is taken out of all other actions; it is reduced to its simplest form, or at any rate to as simple a form as it can be brought to without losing the sense of its place in the world. The characters that are involved in it are freed from everything that is not a part of that action; . . . it is an energy, an eddy of life purified from everything but itself. The dramatist must picture life in action. . . . (E, 153-54)

What links Yeats and Jonson in this regard is their common appreciation of form and their mutual recognition of the human body as a potentially perfect form, Jonson having declared that "a body without proportion cannot be goodly" (2739-40), Yeats expressing delight in the "very limbs and lineaments" of the ever-changing form of life (E, 153).

Yeat's simultaneous adoption and rebuttal of traditional principles and practices is further illustrated by the reasons behind his recommendation that writers ought to study the masters. Traditionally, study has been a primary requisite for a poet. As noted earlier, Jonson explains in Timber; or Discoveries that

> that, which wee especially require . . . is an exactnesse of Studie, and multiplicity of reading, which maketh a full man, not alone enabling him to know the History, or Argument of a Poeme, and to report it: but so to master the matter, and Stile, as to shew, hee knowes, how to handle, place, or dispose of either, with elegancie, when need shall bee.(2483-88)

By contrast, although Yeats acknowledges the traditional benefits of study--"Let us learn construction from the masters, and dialogue from ourselves" (81)--he also suggests quite a different motive--purification:

> today we come to understand great literature by a long preparation, or by some accident of nature, for we only begin to understand life when our minds have been purified of temporary interests by study. (152)

Again, Yeats's principles are characteristically subjective. For him there is no external test to declare what is and is not literature, only what he describes as the "happiness" which shows that nature has been

obeyed. For the artist that happiness is called "delight in beauty" and he can convey it only "in its highest form after he has purified his mind with the great writers of the world." Indeed, the example of others must never be "more than a preparation": "if his art does not seem, when it comes, to be the creation of new personality, in a few years it will not seem to be alive at all" (152).

By contrast, Jonson's principles relate to an art that was primarily imitative and subject to judgement according to objective laws and standards. Indeed, imitation is his third requisite in a poet:

> to bee able to convert the substance, or Riches of another Poet, to his own use. To make choise of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him, till he grow very Hee: or so like him, as the Copie may be mistaken for the Principall. Not, as a Creature, that swallowes, what it takes in, crude, raw, or indigested; but, that feedes with an Appetite, and hath a Stomache to concoct, divide, and turne all into nourishment. Not, to imitate servilely . . . and catch at vices, for vertue; but, to draw forth out of the best, and choisest flowers . . .: observe, how the best writers have imitated, and follow them. (2467-80)

He scorns poets who try to depend upon their own originality--"the Wretcheder are the obstinate contemners of all helpes, and Arts: such as presuming on their owne Naturals" (745-46). He does not deny the importance of natural abilities or the capacity for originality. Indeed, he considers that "the Poet must bee able by nature, and instinct, to powre out the Treasure of his minde" (2412-13); yet he insists that the poet's success is ultimately conditional upon his artistry which comes through exercise, imitation and study.

In his own Discoveries Yeats comments quite specifically on the fate of such practice in modern times. Developing a contrast between imitation and originality, in a distinctly modern way, he notes that in the Renaissance and earlier

imitation was conscious or all but conscious, and because originality was but so much the more a part of the man himself, so much deeper because unconscious, no quick analysis could unravel their miracle, that needed generations, it may be, for its understanding; but it is our imitation that is unconscious and awaits the certainties of time. (E & I, 285)

Some years later, in Death of Synge (ca. 1909), he makes a similar distinction:

The old playwrights took old subjects, did not even arrange the subject in a new way. They were absorbed in expression, that is to say in what is most near and delicate. The new playwrights invent their subjects and dislike anything customary in the arrangement of the fable, but their expression is as common as the newspapers where they first learned to write. (A, 521)

In fact, he develops a contrast between Renaissance and modern practice, imitation and originality, which complements his earlier, somewhat analogous distinction between poetry that is picture, and poetry that is an energy or gesture which is outlined at the close of "First Principles," Samhain: 1904:

There are two kinds of poetry, and they are commingled in all the greatest works. When the tide of life sinks low there are pictures . . . [which] make us sorrowful. We share the poet's separation from what he describes. It is life in the mirror, and our desire for it is as the desire of the lost souls for God; but when Lucifer stands among his friends, when Villon sings his dead ladies to so gallant a rhythm, when Timon makes his epitaph, we feel no sorrow, for life herself has made one of her eternal gestures, has called up into our hearts her energy that is eternal delight. In Ireland, where the tide of life is rising, we turn, not to picture-making, but to the imagination of personality--to drama, gesture. (163)

These distinctions reach to the heart of the difference between traditional practice and modern needs which is doubly illustrated by the connection which may be made here between poetry that is picture, and imitation; and, between poetry that is gesture, and originality. Jonson provides traditional definitions:

Poetry, and Picture, are Arts of a like nature; and both are busie about imitation . . . (1509-10);

A poet is that, which by the Greeks is call'd . . . a Maker, or a fainer: His Art, an Art of imitation, or faining; expressing the life of man in fit measure, numbers, and harmony. . . . Hence, hee is called a Poet . . . that fayneth and formeth a fable, and writes things like the Truth. (2346-54)

In the light of the modern need for verification according to experience this traditional definition of the poet who writes "things like the Truth" assumes an altogether different significance. Truth no longer has an external referent that is public and objective but is defined, subjectively, as "a self-consistent personal vision" (E, 230). Imitation, if indeed it may be said to be operative, is now less fidelity to externals than to the impulse of life itself.

Thus, while old definitions still provide a basis for discussion of literary matters whose importance has persisted through to the modern age, time has clearly altered what emerges from those discussions. The care which Yeats took with form and style was principally directed towards the perfect expression of himself to which all else was subordinate. Accordingly, in his own Discoveries he applauds Verlaine, his French contemporary, and acknowledges his comments with approval:

To be his ordinary self as much as possible . . . that was certainly his pose; and in the lecture he gave at Oxford he insisted that 'the poet should hide nothing of himself,' though he must speak it all with 'a care of that dignity which should manifest iself, if not in perfection of form, at all events with an invisible, insensible, but effectual endeavour after this lofty and severe quality, I was about to say this virtue.' It was this feeling for his own personality, his delight in singing his own life, even more than life itself, which made the generation I belong to compare him to Villon. (E & I, 270-71)

Undoubtedly that 'ordinary self' is related to the 'normal self' to which Yeats refers at the end of that section. Again, the general concept is

not unrelated to lessons available in Jonson's Timber; or Discoveries, but here, Yeats's choice of Verlaine as exemplum points to the essential modernity of his aspirations and to his growing recognition that the principles he had been formulating must ultimately be applied to the expression of himself.

Indeed Discoveries, from which that portrait of Verlaine has been cited, marks the climax of Jonson's importance to Yeats's early prose. Although it is possible to marshall considerable indirect evidence of that importance, it is Yeats's deliberate appropriation of Jonson's title for almost the only polished prose that appeared in that period which provides confirmation of his direct contact with Jonson's work and serves as an open invitation to comparisons with Jonson's compendium.

More specifically, a survey of the publishing history of the twenty-one titled sections of Yeats's Discoveries reveals that it is highly probable that Yeats had Jonson's work in mind when he altered his title from "My Thoughts and My Second Thoughts" to Discoveries sometime between the autumn of 1906 and the autumn of 1907. The first title had been used for the publication of the first three installments (Sections 1-5; 6-10; and 11-17) in the Gentleman's Magazine in September, October, and November 1906. The new title appeared with the fourth in the Sanachie (Autumn [October] 1907), and was retained when the work was published as a whole in December 1907 (See A.Wade, A Bibliography of the Writings of W. B. Yeats (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1951), 80-81).

Yeats himself provided evidence that Jonson was in his mind during composition of those essays in his letter to Bullen, dated 21 September 1906, a year before his title was changed. The letter opens with Yeats's

report that he is "copying the next instalment of 'Thoughts and Second Thoughts'" and proceeds through his confession that he is "deep in Ben Jonson" to his request for more information about Jonson's plays and masques (L, 478-79). Thus, it is not unreasonable to suggest that in the period between this letter and the appearance of Yeats's final installment, Yeats gave considerable thought to Jonson's work and deliberately altered his title in the light of parallels between his own intentions and Jonson's accomplishment.

Jonson's Timber; or Discoveries; Made upon Men and Matters: As they Flowed out of his daily Readings; or had refluxe to his particular notion of the Times is a random collection of principles and practices of a working poet of the Renaissance which provides, as his title indicates, a daily record of readings and reactions to the times. As a set of 'discoveries' it is a 'showing forth' of the best of the past. Most accurately described as a 'commonplace book,' it consists of almost 3,000 lines of commentary, two thirds devoted to literature, the rest to aphorisms and general observations on subjects ranging from court behaviour, to letter-writing, education and the relationship between a prince and his subjects. Although not organized for publication, it is unified by the consistent tone of Jonson's selections which reflects both his bitter struggles in defence of his profession and his continual desire to instruct others. Indeed, Herford and Simpson have described it as "a study in self-discipline, a careful selection of what [Jonson] believed to be the soundest for contemporary guidance" (H & S, XI, 212).

By contrast, in his Discoveries Yeats presents a modern poet, similarly concerned with the present and future of his art, offering

guidance to others, but in the process of defining the role of the poet, for himself and for others. Accordingly, he provides what appears to be a modern poet's response to felt experience in order to establish critical principles. Indeed it is an indication of the difference between Renaissance and modern poets that while Yeats must record the process of making meaning from experience, Jonson could define the poet and his function by selecting from an already established body of definitive principles. And although Yeats could use that body, his remarks in Samhain and Discoveries confirm that as a modern he had to adapt individual principles to modern conditions. Thus by changing his title from "Thoughts" to Discoveries he provoked an association between his series and Jonson's which not only highlights similarities between the two works, but also draws attention to their differences by throwing into relief the distinction between 'thoughts' and 'discoveries' as well as the shift in the meaning of 'discoveries' which had occurred in the interval between the Renaissance and the modern period.

In the Renaissance, the word 'discoveries' implied an objective showing forth of selections from an already known body of facts. In its modern sense, it also applies to the subjective investigation of one's own mind and personal reactions to experience. Yet, paradoxically, although Yeats's first series of Discoveries appears to provide a spontaneous description of personal experience, and seems to have been accidentally occasioned by a visit to a theatre in West Ireland, it is actually a carefully structured work, calculated to reflect Yeats's views of the artist in contemporary Ireland. In sequence, he has explored the poet's relationship to his audience (sec. 1-5), his attitude to his material (sec. 6-10),

his concept of himself as poet (sec. 11-17), and finally, his idea of the ideal poet's response to his environment and his audience (sec. 8-21). That is, Yeats used his artistry to make his work seem spontaneous, in contrast to Jonson's rambling and truly spontaneous recollections.

The deception inherent in Yeats's appropriation of Jonson's title persists throughout his series. In particular, his comments on the relative consciousness of imitation and originality in Renaissance and modern literature are typical of the way in which his essays are generally indebted to Ben Jonson. The contrast between the old and the new which is apparent there illustrates Yeats's, by then, characteristic practice of transforming traditional principles into modern principles by altering the emphasis and exploiting shifts of meaning in essentially the same words.

As a result, basically subjective modern principles seem to acquire some of the authority and objectivity of Renaissance counterparts long sanctioned by tradition and compliance with objective standards. Some years later, when Middleton Murry, quite possibly inspired by Yeats's precedent, again borrowed Jonson's title, he explained that he had done so, not because it could be interpreted "as meaning that there is something final in the results of these explorations," but to suggest "the excitement of losing oneself in exploration, the elation of being possessed" by the very process of discovery. None the less his disclaimer, that he has recorded "not discoveries in any absolute sense, but simply discoveries for [himself]," points to a typically modern self-consciousness about the subjectivity demanded by the age and, objections to the contrary, seems a plea for the finality which appears to have accompanied similar

revelations in the past (Discoveries: Essays in Literary Criticism (London: W. Collins and Sons, 1924), 9-10). At the same time, Yeats has shown that the record of such an apparently spontaneous experience must in fact be a highly shaped literary work which is effective largely because of comparisons and contrasts with works like Jonson's which have long been sanctioned by literary tradition.

The combination of objective authority and spontaneity which use of Jonson's title affords must have satisfied Yeats since he borrowed it again in 1908 for a second series of "Discoveries" which was never completed and was only recently published, in its unfinished state, by Curtis Bradford (The Massachusetts Review, V, 2 (Winter 1964), 297-306). Bradford notes in his Foreword that Yeats had explained to his father in a letter of 1908 or 1909 that he was writing the series "side by side" with The Player Queen to keep his "philosophic tendency" out of his playwriting, putting it instead "into a stream of random thoughts . . ." (297). Thus, this second series, in fact, more closely resembles the form of Jonson's early compendium.

These series, then, along with the prose drafts of poems included in Yeats's Journal, as well as earlier prose written in his capacity as advisor and teacher, illustrate that Yeats not only echoed Jonson's principles in his work, but also followed his practice in daily life. Indeed, Yeats's early career as a writer of prose points to other facets of Yeats's Jonsonian personality which make it even more possible to see why Daniel Harris terms Jonson, "Yeats's most natural kin among Renaissance writers" (71).

3. Poetry

a) Evidence of Encounters

The effects of Yeats's interest in Jonson are most obvious in his poetry where he implemented principles shaped by his encounter with Timber; or Discoveries and other Renaissance treatises. In addition, he clearly appropriated poetic skills from Jonson's dramas which also contributed in a significant way to the development of his poetic persona. Finally, as both Thomas McAlindon and Daniel Harris agree, Jonson's non-dramatic poetry was undoubtedly a major factor in Yeats's poetic development.

Although he acknowledges that "there is no published evidence which proves clearly" that Yeats read Jonson's poems with care, McAlindon suggests that it is "very probable" in view of Synge's appreciation of Jonson, Yeats's own interest in Jonson's aristocratic ideal, and the lords and ladies mentioned in Jonson's dedications and masques. He observes that Jonson's poems follow the masques in standard editions of the Works, including Gifford's, which, in view of Yeat's interest in the masque, almost assures his contact with the poetry. In addition, he notes Yeats's reference to 'The Under-Wood Volume' in 1901,[15] the "merest chance" which preserved Yeats's letter to Lady Gregory in which he confesses that Spenser's Pastorall Aeglogue upon the Death of Sir Philip Sidney was his model for "Shepherd and Goatherd," and even Yeats's remark in his notes to Poems of Spenser that on more than one occasion Spenser had quoted from William Dunbar "without acknowledgement," pro-

viding a precedent for Yeats's own susceptibility to an unacknowledged influence. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, McAlindon concludes that

> the resemblances between Jonson's non-dramatic verse and much of the poetry written by Yeats after 1909 seem . . . to be so numerous as to merit a detailed examination. They extend from a large general resemblance . . . down to syntax and epigram-theme.(167)

For his own part, McAlindon limits his examination of specific resemblance to the parallel between "To Penshurst" and "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931," and between the Cary-Morison funeral ode, "To the Immortall Memorie, and Friendship of that Noble Paire, Sir Lucius Cary, and Sir H. Morison" (The Under-wood LXX), and "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory."

Daniel Harris conducts a somewhat broader survey which includes an extensive study of the influence of "Penshurst" on Yeats's ongoing attempts to express the significance of Coole in his poetry, as well as a cursory examination of other parallels (68-71). But like McAlindon, he concludes that "there is no external evidence" that Yeats knew Jonson's poetry (69).

However, neither McAlindon nor Harris cite two references to Jonson with respect to poetry in essays of 1901 and 1922. In the first, "What is 'Popular Poetry'?" (E&I, 3-12) Yeats illustrates the answer to his own question with a reference to Jonson:

> . . . go down the street with some thought whose bare meaning must be plain to everybody; take with you Ben Jonson's 'Beauty like sorrow dwelleth everywhere,' and find out how utterly its enchantment depends on an association of beauty with sorrow which written tradition has from the unwritten, which had it in its turn from ancient religion. . . . (7)

Some twenty years later, Yeats repudiated a contemporary criticism of Jonson's poetry, recalling the very same question in "Ireland after Parnell":

> . . . one well-known anthology was introduced by the assertion that such [patriotic] love-poetry was superior to 'affected and artificial' English love songs like 'Drink to me only with thine eyes'--'affected and artificial,' the very words used by English victorians who wrote for the newspapers to discourage capricious, personal writing.(204)

Thus Jonson's poetry remained an example to Yeats of good poetry. Slight as these two references may be, they both indicate that Yeats valued Jonson as a poet. Indeed, Yeats may have paid more than passing heed to the reference to "Song: To Celia" (The Forrest IX) in that introductory passage, if, as Carpenter suggests, his own "A Drinking Song" (1910) is a reminiscence of Jonson's poem ("W. B. Yeats's Literary Use of the Renaissance" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1967) 118). Similarly, the adaptation of Jonson's odes ("Where do'st thou carelesse lie," "Come leave the loathed stage" and "Yff Men, and tymes . . .") and the Apologetical Dialogue which accompany his acknowledgement of Jonson in the Closing Rhyme which serves as a tailpiece to Responsibilities suggest that it was Jonson as poet, not dramatist, who captured Yeats's attention.

b) Influence in Early Poetry

Evidence of Yeats's very early interest in Ben Jonson is provided by Yeats himself, in his late recollection of the influence of The Sad Shepherd on The Island of Statues (See UP, II, 508 and E&I, 510). In a recent study, Dwight Eddins compares the two works on the basis of setting, plot and characterization (Yeats: The Nineteenth-Century Matrix, 17-18). Most obviously these works share the pastoral as both setting and literary device, as well as a number of stock situations. For example, while a shadow is cast over Jonson's scene by the wicked witch Maudlin who imprisons the shepherd's sweetheart, Earine, in a tree, Yeats's shepherd, Almintor, and others like him are turned to stone by an Enchantress and her spirits. Both plots depend upon multiple disguises and ensuing mistaken identity. In The Island of Statues, Nachina disguises herself as a shepherd-boy and sets out on a quest to save Almintor. And, while the events of The Sad Shepherd point to Earine's apparent revival from death to life, so the deeds of Nachina, Thernot and Colin result in a revival of the statues.

Moreover, as Eddins points out, there are similarities in the characterizations of Jonson's shepherd, Aeglamour, and Yeats's Almintor. Both are sad because they despair of love. Their mood, which sets the tone of both plays, is reflected in Jonson's title which Yeats, in turn, borrowed for the second poem in Collected Poems where it is paired with "The Song of the Happy Shepherd." The latter originally appeared as an "Epilogue to 'The Island of Statues' and 'The Seeker'" (October 1885)--

The Seeker being yet another of Yeats's attempts at pastoral drama. Although "The Sad Shepherd" was known as "Miserrimus" until 1895, similarities in mood and language suggest that Yeats had Jonson's play in mind during its composition.

Compare, for example, the details of "The Sad Shepherd" and Aeglamour's speech, Act I, Scene v, ll. 33-63. Yeats's shepherd calls for the sympathy of the stars, the sea, the hills, the valley and even the dew drops. Aeglamour assumes that the world is sharing his sorrow:

> Did not the whole Earth sicken, when she died?
> As if there since did fall one drop of dew,
> But what was wept for her! or any stalke
> Did bear a Flower! or any branch a bloome;
> After her wreath was made . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . the Vale wither'd the same Day . . . .
> . . . . . .
> No Sun, or Moon, or other cheerfull Starre
> Look'd out of heaven! but all the Cope was darke,
> As it were hung so for her Exequies!

Later, Aeglamour fantasizes that his sweetheart's death has brought "new concords" to the "loudest Seas, and most enraged Windes" (III, ii, 23-35; 38-43). That is, Jonson's character invokes and receives comfort from the kind of universal sympathy which Yeats's shepherd can not find. Similarly, while Aeglamour receives comfort from the "new Philosophy" of Karolin's song (I, v, 35-80; 83), the "inarticulate moan" of the pearly shell provides no solace to Yeats's shepherd. Indeed, Yeats's poem serves as an early recognition of the inadequacy of traditional solutions when applied to modern problems which is, ultimately, the crux of the dilemma which continues to confront the modern poet.

Similarly, its companion poem, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd," deals with the inadequacy of old conventions in the modern age. It too is generally indebted to the pastoral tradition of the English Renaissance,

especially, as will be seen elsewhere in this study, to Milton's pastoral poetry, and also to Spenser, to whom Yeats acknowledged a debt during composition of The Island of Statues (E&I, 510). This multiple debt to the Renaissance suggests that in this early period Yeats gave considerable thought to its value as a source of poetic models. But although he returned to its pastoral tradition for a model for "Shepherd and Goatherd," later interests directed him to other aspects of Renaissance achievement.

c) The Middle Years

Yeats wrote little poetry in the first decade of this century, roughly the years between In the Seven Woods (1903) and The Green Helmet and Other Poems (1910) and Responsibilities (1914). By his own admission he devoted much of this time to the Irish theatre, a project which he likens to the shaping of an agate, from which "one discovers thoughts . . . that seem important and principles which may be applied to life itself" (E&I, 219). Indeed, many of Yeats's discoveries in these years were ultimately applicable to his poetry since they included the formulation of literary principles which contributed significantly to the evolution of the new style which would make his poetry truly modern. That is, they helped him to effect the change towards "a less dream-burdened will" which he predicts in his Preface to In the Seven Woods in 1903.

Yeats's particular interest in Jonson in those years is not difficult to explain. Jonson was a major dramatist as well as poet whose literary principles, recorded in Timber; or Discoveries had been tested by his years in the theatre as well as his experience as a poet. In addition, Jonson was a conscious craftsman whose diligence is reflected in his advice to others: "Repeat often what wee have formerly written . . ." (ll. 1709-10), ". . . things, wrote with labour, deserve to be so read, and will last their Age" (ll. 2465-66). Thus, when Yeats wrote of the composition of On Baile's Strand, that he "never re-wrote anything so many times" (VP, 814), he declared himself a Jonsonian poet.

However, Yeats not only took much care with new work, he also devoted much time to revision, a practice which he continued throughout his career which, more immediately, resulted in the appearance of Poetical Works (1906-07) and Collected Works (1908). Indeed, of items 12 through 26 in the Bibliography of Variorum Poems (1899 through 1910), only four are new publications: The Shadowy Waters, In the Seven Woods, Stories of Red Hanrahan, and The Green Helmet and Other Poems. The others are revisions or collections of previously published material.

In general, these revisions illustrate Yeats's own search for more concrete images and a more prosaic language as well as a heightened consciousness of poetry as a reflection of human experience, both actual and ideal. The long-term effect of these convictions is apparent in a comparison between the early versions of "The Sorrow of Love" (1892, 1895) and the revised version for the 1924 edition of Poems (1895) which Thomas Parkinson describes as "a literal translation of texture from one idiom into the other" (W. B. Yeats: Self Critic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) 165). Although Parkinson considers both versions of the poem in some detail (165-172), he perhaps does not sufficiently emphasize his own observation that when it came time for revisions, Yeats "saw plainly that 'earth's old and weary cry' was not the cry of the natural world but of that world qualified, even degraded, by the presence of human beings" (167). Although 'degraded' is perhaps not the best word, the major distinction between what are, in effect, two poems, is the greater immediacy of the human presence in the new poem. "Man's image and his cry" is clearly at the centre of the revised version and, in keeping with Yeats's other poetry of the twenties and thirties,

the central concern of that version is the assertion of man's centrality in a hostile and impersonal universe.

But it is the new poetry of these years which provides the clearest record of Yeats's deliberate change of style. The changes which would characterize the poetry of later volumes were anticipated in In the Seven Woods (1903). In particular, its title poem reflects the search for "more of manful energy, more of cheerful acceptance of whatever arises out of the logic of events, and for clean outline" which he described in his later Preface, and, in these respects and others, provides indications that Jonson's influence was already at work.

"In the Seven Woods" (1902) is an occasional poem of local interest which constitutes Yeats's first attempt to deal poetically with the political and social changes which ultimately brought about the demise of Coole--"I have forgot awhile / Tara uprooted, and a new commonness / Upon the Throne. . . ." Although references to "Quiet" and the "Great Archer" obscure the local concreteness of "Pairc-na-lee" (which to most ears is more exotic than local) and unmistakably connect the poem to Yeats's Romantic manner of the nineties, the poem introduces the contrast between what Parkinson has termed "the contemporary urban fact and the permanent rural ideal" (91) which, with the reference to the "lime-tree flowers" in line three, anticipates later treatments of Coole in country house poems in the tradition of Jonson's "To Penshurst." In addition, Yeats's attention to contemporary events, social change and a particular locale, as well as a general development towards a 'plain style,' point to areas in which he was already susceptible to Jonson's influence and illustrate how "In the Seven Woods" looked forward to later poems in

subject, theme and style.

In addition, perhaps the finest poem in the volume, "Adam's Curse" (1902) reveals the fundamental affinity between Yeats's and Jonson's attitudes to their craft. "Adam's Curse" includes a description of the labour of the poet to which Yeats remained true for the rest of his career. Such labour, whether it be of a poet, a beautiful woman or a lover, actually constitutes the basis of what Yeats later termed 'recklessness' which turns on the paradox that much effort is needed to produce the effect of spontaneity. Yeats's

> 'A line will take us hours maybe;
> Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
> Our stitching and unstitching has been naught
> . . . . . .
> (CP, 88),

is equivalent to Jonson's

> . . . he
> Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
> . . . and strike the second heat.
> ("To the Memory of . . . Mr. William Shakespeare . . .," Poems, ed. Johnston, 287)

Although Arnold Stein ("Yeats: A Study in Recklessness," Sewanee Review, LVII (1949), 603-26) and others have suggested that Yeats first learned of this typical Renaissance characteristic from Castiglione, it is likely that Yeats first encountered it at any one of several points in Jonson's work where, for example, in addition to his warning in his commemoration of Shakespeare, in his Timber; or Discoveries he urged letter-writers to use "a diligent kind of negligence" (2264), and poets, to carry their Art "as none but Artificers perceive it" (780-81).

Significant indications of Yeats's full debt to Jonson did not appear until The Green Helmet and Other Poems (1910) where Jonson's influence

is apparent in both style and subject-matter. As Harold Bloom describes, Yeats was growing "accumstomed to his labours in a Jonsonian mode" (168). In addition, these poems, which undoubtedly have value in themselves, also anticipate the more complete development of Yeats's satiric persona in Responsibilities, the volume which, for Bloom, marks the climax of the 'middle' Yeats (168).

None the less, neither volume has received extensive critical attention with respect to Jonson's influence on Yeats. Bloom, whose treatment of both is brief, locates Yeats's efforts in those years "in the tradition of Jonson and Landor" (168) while, with more enthusiasm for Yeats's achievement, Thomas McAlindon similarly declares that

> no English poet, not even Landor, approximates so closely as Jonson does to the egotistical, arrogant satirist who aligns himself with the aristocracy and associates his enemies with the mob in The Green Helmet and Responsibilities. Anger and disgust, contempt for the many and admiration for the few--entirely new material for Yeats--form the basis of the finest poems in these two volumes. (166)[16]

McAlindon at least attempts a cursory examination of the two volumes but, because he is limited by space and the nature of his study, the tailpiece to Responsibilities is the only poem of the period to receive extensive consideration (166-67). Thus, although others have detected Jonsonian characteristics in particular poems, no one has adequately revealed Yeats's debt to Jonson in this the period of his most direct influence on Yeats.

In fact, the poems of The Green Helmet resemble each other in form, language--including diction and syntax--and subject, and have many characteristics which may be termed 'Jonsonian.' From their inception they bear marks of Yeats's interest in Jonson as Yeats appears to have adopted Jonson's method of composition. Just as, according to Drummond,

Jonson wrote all his verses "first in prose' as his master Camden had taught, so Journal entries for the years 1908-10 reveal that Yeats wrote prose drafts for most of the poems which appear in The Green Helmet and Other Poems.[17] Details of Yeats's method of composition will be considered presently. Here it is sufficient to note that as poet-craftsman Yeats appeared to be shaping himself in the image of what was known about Ben Jonson.

In addition, just as Jonson is celebrated as a great occasional poet, so Yeats turned more and more to contemporary subjects of an occasional nature. Anticipated by the reference to "new commonness" in "In the Seven Woods," the poems of Green Helmet are among Yeat's first attempts to use his poetry to attack elements in society which threatened his personal and social ideals. The occasional nature of the poems was, in fact, even more strongly emphasized when they first appeared in 1910. At that time eleven of the nineteen poems in the volume appeared within a sub-section, "Momentary Thoughts," including some of the most important examples of Jonson's influence.[18] Although the device was dropped in 1912, quite possibly because Yeats came to see that at least seven of the eight remaining poems which were about his relationship with Maud Gonne ("His Dream" excepted), were also of a 'momentary' or occasional nature, it serves even yet, albeit indirectly, to emphasize Yeats's Jonsonian intentions.

Almost all poems in The Green Helmet have Jonsonian characteristics, many of which have been brought to bear upon Yeat's expression of Maud Gonne's significance. The opening poems, from "A Woman Homer Sung" to "Against Unworthy Praise," reveal both a conflict and a connection between Yeats's ambition as a poet and his desire for Maud. Not un-

expectedly, this conflict arose from her ability to distract him from his work--"Some may have blamed you that you took away / The verses that could move them . . ." ("Reconciliation," CP, 102), while the connection was forged by her power to inspire him which, in turn, drove him to perfect his craft in the Jonsonian manner:

> Whereon I wrote and wrought,
> And now, being grey,
> I dream that I have brought
> To such a pitch my thought
> That coming time can say,
> 'He shadowed in a glass
> What thing her body was'
> ("A Woman Homer Sung," CP, 100);
>
> . . . the best I have done
> Was done to make it plain;
>
> That every year I have cried, 'At length
> My darling understands it all,
> Because I have come into my strength,
> And words obey my call."
> ("Words," CP, 100-01)

Further, Yeats's references to classical mythology in "A Woman Homer Sung," "No Second Troy" and "Peace," as well as "The Fascination of What's Difficult," mark the beginning of a Jonsonian use of such mythology to extend the significance of his own situation. For example, the analogy which he draws between himself and Maud and Homer and Helen places them in the tradition of the 'learned throng' which Jonson enumerated in "An Ode" (The Under-wood XXVII):

> Hellen, did Homer never see
> Thy beauties, yet could write of thee?
> . . . . . .
> And shall I not my Celia bring,
> Where men may see whom I doe sing?
> (Poems, ed. Johnston, 155-56)

Yeats's use of mythology is compared with Jonson's in at least three studies. In addition to Donald Davie's observation of a stylistic

similarity in Jonson's and Yeats's treatment of myth ("Michael Robartes and the Dancer," 83-84), Daniel Harris notes that the speaker of "A Prayer for My Daughter" handles classical myth with Jonson's irreverent urbanity, suggesting a comparison between Yeats's reference to Vulcan in stanza four and Jonson's scorn of Vulcan in "An Execration upon Vulcan" (141), while J. G. Nichols, citing this same fourth stanza, remarks upon Yeats's "expression of a contemporary sensibility through classical reference" (88). Providing further examples, Nichols also notes that both Jonson and Yeats extend the "meaning inherent in the myth till it becomes a sort of metaphor, or till the distinction between reference and metaphor becomes one not worth making" (89).[19]

Finally, in "Against Unworthy Praise" (1910) Yeats ponders the difference between Maud's attitude to her audience--

> . . . she, singing upon her road,
> Half lion, half child, is at peace--

and his own--

> O Heart, be at peace, because
> Nor knave nor dolt can break
> What's not for their applause,
> Being for a woman's sake.
> (CP, 103-104)

Already, as McAlindon (166), Carpenter (117) and others briefly note, Yeats's language and attitude recall Jonson's persona in The Poetaster and Cynthia's Revels. Here the words "knave" and "dolt" and the "slander" and "ingratitude" which Yeats perceives in the crowd's response to Maud are related to the Jonsonian qualities of "The Fascination of What's Difficult," written in the same year, while both anticipate Yeats's most definitive usurpation of Jonson's persona from the Apologetical Dialogue and "An Ode: To himself" in the tailpiece to Responsibilities.

In addition, "Against Unworthy Praise" looks forward to a later poem on the same theme, "The People" (1915), where Yeats surmised that all that he had earned for his work was "the spite of this unmannerly town." There, the crowd which Maud describes is made up of the knaves and dolts who characterized the audience of the earlier poem:

> The drunkards, pilferers of public funds,
> All the dishonest crowd . . .
> . . . dared meet my face,
> . . . and set upon me.
>
> (CP, 170)

But there, as in "Against Unworthy Praise," Maud remained 'high and aloofe,' as both Jonson and Yeats had vainly sought to do. Thus, Yeats's perception of Maud was affected by Jonson's influence in yet another manner, in as much as her response to the crowd appeared to fulfill an ideal which Yeats had partially shaped through his knowledge of Jonson.

In the poems which follow in Collected Poems, including those originally entitled "Momentary Thoughts" and two later additions, "On Hearing that the Students of our New University have joined the Agitation against Immortal Literature" (1912) and "At the Abbey Theatre" (1911), Jonson's influence on Yeats is even clearer. In form, many reflect Yeats's adaptation of Jonson's wider use and development of the epigram within the English tradition. "The Coming of Wisdom with Time" (1909-10), "On hearing that the Students . . .," and "To a Poet who would have me Praise certain Bad Poets, Imitators of His and Mine" (1912) are examples of pithy, four-line epigrams written by Yeats during this period. In the last two especially, Yeats appears to have emulated the sharp, satiric barb of Jonson's best epigrams. They may be compared with examples of Jonson's work:

Yeats:

> Where, where but here have Pride and Truth,
> That long to give themselves for wage,
> To shake their wicked sides at youth
> Restraining reckless middle-age?
> ("On Hearing . . .," CP, 105)

and

> You say, as I have often given tongue
> In praise of what another's said or sung,
> 'Twere politic to do the like by these;
> But was there ever a dog that praised his fleas?
> ("To a Poet . . .," CP, 105);

Jonson:

> Play-wright convict of publike wrongs to men,
> Takes private beatings, and begins againe.
> Two kindes of valour he doth shew, at ones;
> Active in's braine, and passive in his bones
> ("On Play-wright" (Epigramme LXVIII), Poems,
> ed. Johnston, 33),

> To plucke downe mine, Poll sets new wits still,
> Still, 'tis his lucke to praise me 'gainst his will
> ("On Court-Parrat" (Epigramme LXXI), Poems, ed. Johnston, 34),

and

> I cannot thinke there's that antipathy
> 'Twixt puritanes, and players, as some cry;
> Though Lippe, at Pauls, rannefrom his text away,
> T'inveigh 'gainst playes: what did he then but play?
> ("On Lippe, the Teacher" (Epigramme LXXV), Poems, ed.
> Johnston, 36).

These selections illustrate Jonson's use of the short epigram to inveigh against his professional enemies. They show how he continually fought the battles which he describes in his plays and indicate yet again that, like Yeats, Jonson was concerned about his audience, its quality and its reaction to him.

Perhaps the finest product of Jonson's influence on Yeats is "The Fascination of What's Difficult" (1909-10). Rajan observes that it "of

all the poems of our time . . . is the most Jonsonian in the run of its verse" ("Yeats and the Renaissance," 114), while Daniel Harris suggests that its general conception and its quality of exasperation were derived from Jonson's "Come leave the loathed Stage" ("Ode to Himselfe," Poems, ed. Johnston, 298). In particular, Harris notes its "rough Jonsonian rhythm" and points to a parallel between Jonson's "Runne on, and rage, sweat, censure, and condemn" and Yeats's "Shiver under the lash, strain, sweat and jolt" (71).

Again, Yeats's subject is his frustration with the theatre, its people and its demands:

> . . . plays
> That have to be set up in fifty ways,
> . . . the day's war with every knave and dolt,
> Theatre business, management of men.
> (CP, 104)

His threat to "find the stable and pull out the bolt" may be compared with Jonson's threat to leave the stage at the beginning of "Ode to Himselfe":

> Come leave the loathed Stage,
> And the more loathsome Age,
> Where pride and impudence in faction knit,
> Usurpe the Chaire of Wit:
> Inditing and arraigning every day
> Something they call a Play.
> (Poems, ed. Johnston, 298)

Indeed Yeats's debt to Jonson's ode is extensive. Just as he complains that

> The fascination of what's difficult
> Has dried the sap out of my veins, and rent
> Spontaneous joy and natural content
> Out of my heart
> (CP, 104),

so Jonson advises himself to

> Leave things so prostitute
> And take th' Alcaike Lute;
> Or thine owne Horace, or Anacreons Lyre;
> Warm thee by Pindars fire:
> And though thy Nerves be shrunke, and blood be cold,
> Ere years have made thee old,
> Strike that disdainful heat
> Throughout, to their defeat.
> (Poems, ed. Johnston, 299)

Yeats's "dried the sap out of my veins" is a re-working of Jonson's "Nerves be shrunke." His absence of "Spontaneous joy and natural content" is equivalent to Jonson's desire for music and the warmth of "Pindar's fire." Yeats's colt is a suitably modern displacement of Pegasus, the classical steed whose story was told by Pindar and others:

> There's something ails our colt
> That must, as if it had not holy blood
> Nor on Olympus leaped from cloud to cloud,
> Shiver under the lash, strain, sweat and jolt
> As though it dragged road-metal.
> (CP, 104),

That is, just as Jonson's blood is now cold, so he has been isolated from the poets of Olympus by the demands of an age that appreciates only what should have been long discarded--"Huskes, Draffe to drinke and swill," "Lees," tales that are "mouldy" and "stale," "Broomes sweepings" and more. Thus, Jonson argues,

> 'Twere simple fury, still thy selfe to wast
> On such as have no taste:
> To offer them a surfeit of pure bread,
> Whose appetites are dead.
> (Poems, ed. Johnston, 298)

The scraps which keep Jonson from offering his audience "pure bread" are equivalent to the road-metal which drags down Yeats's colt, keeping it earth-bound when it should soar up to purer realms.

Further, as Harris already indicates, Yeats's "Shiver under the lash, strain, sweat and jolt" is a parallel of the penultimate line of Jonson's first stanza, "Runne on, and rage, sweat, censure, and condemn." In each case, an uninterrupted series of verbs emphasizes the poet's inability to act and overcome his frustrations. More specifically, Yeats's particular frustrations may be paralleled with Jonson's. His

> curse on plays
> That have to be set up in fifty ways,
> On the day's war with every knave and dolt,
> Theatre business, management of men
> (CP, 104),

is comparable to Jonson's annoyance at

> Inditing and arraigning every day,
> Something they call a Play.
> (Poems, ed. Johnston, 298)

In general, Yeats's use of language 'such as men doe use' reflects Jonson's influence. The expression, "dried the sap out of my veins," is a a Jonsonian adaptation of the language of everyday speech which is not only related to Jonson's confession that his blood is cold, but also connects Yeats's frustration to other analogies between the poet and his practice and the organic growth of a tree in his own poetry, as in the contemporary poem, "The Coming of Wisdom with Time." Again, the words "knave" and "dolt" suggest that Yeats's scorn for those he considered his inferiors matches Jonson's contempt for his peers. The reduction of Pegasus to 'colt,' and the particular choice of 'colt' with its harsh, abrupt sound, illustrates how tradition in general must be modified to accommodate harsh realities of the modern situation. Monosyllables like 'knave,' 'dolt,' 'colt,' and 'jolt' are balanced in Yeats's

poems by Latinate polysyllables like 'fascination,' 'spontaneous' and 'Olympus,' just as Jonson offset common, harsh-sounding words like 'Husks,' 'Scraps,' 'Orts' with words like 'loathed,' 'loathsome' and 'fastidious.' Largely because of the length of his poem Yeats was able to use sound-patterns borrowed from Jonson to particular advantage. The congestion of sound which climaxes in line seven produces the effect of frustration, as does the fact that the whole poem is tightly bound together by a recurring 'a' rhyme between a series of couplets and a sequence of run-on lines.

In summary, the extensive parallels between "The Fascination of What's Difficult" and Jonson's "Ode to Himselfe" confirm that without doubt Yeats's poem was shaped with the earlier poem in mind. Moreover, they illustrate almost conclusively that Yeats was interested in Jonson as a fellow poet and that he was capable of adapting Jonson's poetry to his own use. Although the Ode follows The New Inn in most editions of Works, so that Yeats's reworking of it does not necessarily mean that Yeats had read Jonson's poems, debates over Yeats's means of access to those poems ought not to obscure the fact that he deliberately created his own version of Jonson's Ode. In addition, his attention to Jonson's poem at that particular point in his career was especially timely since it had been written at a particularly difficult point in Jonson's career, amid a storm of controversy not unlike that which surrounded Yeats and his colleagues at the Abbey.

Other poems in the volume also reflect a knowledge of Jonson. For example, William Carpenter cites a parallel between "A Drinking Song," which follows "The Fascination" in Collected Poems, and Jonson's "Song.

To Celia"--"Drinke to me onely, with thine eyes" (Carpenter, dissertation 118; Poems, ed. Johnston, 88). Although Jeffares notes that Yeats wrote "A Drinking Song" for Mirandolina, Lady Gregory's adaptation of Goldoni's La Locandiera (Comm, 107), it is unlikely that Yeats failed to consult Jonson's poem in the process, especially in view of his later reference to Jonson's poem in Autobiographies.

In addition, "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation" (1910)[20] and "These are the Clouds" (1910) are among the poems about Coole in which Jonson's influence is apparent which are discussed at a later point in this study. In particular, "Upon a House" provides an example of Yeats's use of Jonson's apparent method of composition, from prose draft to verse. Also, Daniel Harris notes that the "Renaissance imagery" of "These are the Clouds" has, in part, been distilled from Horace's praise of Caesar in The Poetaster (V. i. 44-50) where in contrast to Caesar, to whom even Phoebus kneels, other princes "sit . . . like clouds, before the sunne."

"At the Abbey Theatre" (1911), added to The Green Helmet in 1912, has been, as Yeats notes, "Imitated from Ronsard." Suffice it here to say that its theme is similar to that of Yeats's other poems about the theatre of this period. Expressions like "know them to the bone" and "dried the sap out of my veins," are typical of the colloquial style which Yeats was then acquiring from Jonson and his contemporaries and would reappear throughout his work. Similarly, his translation of the Proteus image has more energy than Ronsard's original and looks back to his re-working of Jonson's classical imagery in "The Fascination of What's Difficult."

Finally, "All Things can Tempt me" (1908) is a very early poem in which Yeats introduced the dominant concerns of The Green Helmet. It reveals that Yeats saw himself as a poet labouring at his craft in the tradition of Ben Jonson, at least as early as 1908 and probably earlier:

> All things can tempt me from this craft of verse:
> One time it was a woman's face, or worse--
> The seeming needs of my fool-driven land;
> Now nothing but comes readier to the hand
> Than this accustomed toil.
>
> (CP, 109)

Moreover, the consciousness of Yeats's identification with Jonson is even more plausible if, as Nichols suggests, the conclusion of Yeats's poem,

> Yet would be now, could I but have my wish,
> Colder and dumber and deafer than a fish,

is a reminiscence of Jonson's

> Last, in the fishes place, sits he, doth say;
> In married joyes, all should be dumbe, as they

from The Haddington Masque (H & S, VII, 259) (The Poetry of Ben Jonson 161-62).

Yeats's 1910 volume also contained the poetry version of The Green Helmet, in which Jonson's influence has been detected by Bushrui (208). Indeed, Bushrui considers that the most attractive aspect of the play is the "vitality" of its characters, whose "boisterousness" and "rascality," as noted above, make them reminiscent of some of Jonson's characters. In particular, he cites Laeg who shares "the mischievousness and verbosity" of some of Jonson's figures. In addition, the women remind him "of Jonson's viragoes (such as Chloe in The Poetaster)" who as wives "impose their wishes on their husbands, with the exception of Cuchulain, much as Mistress Otter rules her captain" in Jonson's Silent Woman (208).

Thus, almost all of the poems of The Green Helmet, as well as the play itself, may be associated with Yeats's interest in Ben Jonson (only "His Dream," "The Mask," "At Galway Races," "A Friend's Illness" and "Brown Penny" have not been considered). The volume is therefore a fitting culmination of the prose of the preceding twenty years in which Yeats sought the principles upon which his new poetic style would be based. That new style is, in fact, evident throughout The Green Helmet, in the subject-matter, style and theme of its poems. Those poems serve as Yeats's first poetic approach to problems, such as the fate of Coole, the quality of his audience and his need to labour at his craft, which occupied much of his professional career. Because they mark a first step towards the technical achievements of subsequent volumes, these poems attest to the fundamental nature of Ben Jonson's influence which persisted in later volumes and is even more visible in his next, Responsibilities.

With the appearance of the poems which were to be collected in Responsibilities (1914), including Poems Written in Discouragement, the so-called 'middle' period of Yeats development reached its maturity. In a 1914 review of Responsibilities (Cuala Press), Ezra Pound reports that he had discerned "a manifestly new note" in the volume, explaining:

> What I mean by the new note--you could hardly call it a change of style--was apparent four years ago in his No Second Troy. . . .
>
> . . . with the appearance of The Green Helmet and Other Poems, one felt that the minor note--I use the word strictly in the musical sense--had gone or was going out of his poetry; that he was at . . . a cross roads. . . . And since that time one has felt his work becoming gaunter, seeking greater hardness of outline. (Poetry, IV, 1 (April 1914), 65-66)

Pound, like others after him, saw a steady line of development from the Green Helmet volume through to Responsibilities. What he terms the increased 'gauntness' and "greater hardness of outline" are only two effects of

Yeats's adoption of a Jonsonian style. However the technical advances made in the earlier volume, including economy of language, manipulation of classical imagery, controlled expression of frustration and outrage through diction, syntax and rhythm as well as allusion, were not fully put to use until Responsibilities, or rather Poems Written in Discouragement (1913). Pound's reference to "a new robustness . . . the tooth of satire . . ." in a 1916 review of Responsibilities which appeared in a later issue of Poetry (IX, 3 (December 1916), 150) undoubtedly applies to those five poems, as well as the tailpiece to the volume as a whole.

The development of Yeats's satiric skills up to Responsibilities is perhaps best illustrated by "To a Wealthy Man Who Promised a Second Subscription to the Dublin Municipal Gallery If It Were Proved the People Wanted Pictures" (1912-13), the earliest of the poems published in Poems Written in Discouragement. There, these skills are most obviously evident in Yeats's ability to caricature the opposing factions in the Lane Picture Dispute by reducing those who oppose the pictures to Paudeens and Biddies while elevating Lane's supporters through association with the great patrons of the Italian Renaissance--Duke Ercole, Guidobaldi and Cosimo de Medici. The nature of the social problem which he faced allowed Yeats to employ the combined force of the two aspects of social poetry for which Jonson is best known: sharp, epigrammatic satire and polished, aristocratic compliment. In fact the poetry of this period, for which Yeats needed to perceive society from a dual perspective, actual and ideal, illustrates why Jonson was especially valuable to Yeats.

Moreover, Yeats needed not only technical models, but also a persona through which he could exploit the discrepancies revealed by his social perspective and transform his personal feelings into art. Or, in Yeatsean terms, Jonson's satiric persona provided a mask through which Yeats could express his social views in his poetry. Ultimately, however, it was Yeats's personal affinity with Jonson which made his adoption of Jonson's persona so fundamentally important and successful, and made it possible to detect Jonson's voice in Yeats's work, even when his name is not directly invoked.

There is, for example, a Jonsonian echo in the bitterness behind Yeats's scathing description of the Paudeens in the first eight lines, in his demeaning reference to "th' onion-sellers," and in the derogatory pun in the address, "To a Wealthy Man . . ." (emphasis mine). As well, Jonson's voice can be heard behind Yeats's generous praise of Renaissance patrons and their lavish bequests. Finally, Jonson's spirit pervades Yeats's closing injunction "how to live." Although his final image may have had many Renaissance sources, it is perhaps not unrelated to the description of Caesar in Yeats's favourite passage from Poetaster as one "who addeth to the sun / Influence and lustre," whom Phoebus himself worships while other rulers are as but "clouds before the sun," and above all, as one who knows how to give (V, i, 41-42, 49). While Yeats urges his countrymen to

> Look up in the sun's eye and give
> What the exultant heart calls good
> That some new day may breed the best
> Because you gave, not what they would,
> But the right twigs for an eagle's nest!
> (CP, 120)

Jonson's Caesar declares that gifts must not be given blindly, like those of Fortune, but with wisdom:

> Caesar, for his rule, and for so much stuffe
> As Fortune puts in his hand, shall dispose it
> (As if his hand had eyes, and soule in it)
> With worth and judgement. "Hands, that part with gifts,
> "Or will restraine their use, without desert;
> "Or with a miserie numm'd to vertues right,
> "Worke, as they had no soule to governe them,
> "And quite reject her: sev'ring their estates
> "From humane order. Whosoever can,
> "And will not cherish Vertue, is no man.
> (V, i, 58-67)

"To a Wealthy Man" is an occasional poem of the type at which Jonson excelled. The other poems, published in 1913, also record Yeats's response to contemporary events. For example, current social bitterness contributed to the disillusionment with the Irish Movement which Yeats expressed in "September 1913" (1913) while the Paudeen mentality which he identified in "To a Wealthy Man," and wrote about in "Paudeen" (1913), is implicit in its opening stanza:

> What need you, being come to sense,
> But fumble in a greasy till
> And add the halfpence to the pence
> And prayer to shivering prayer, until
> You have dried the marrow from the bone?
> (CP, 120-21)

This time, that mentality is contrasted with another kind of spirit, the spirit of those who "weighed too lightly what they gave." Indeed, this entire series is about gifts to society, especially those made in the face of an indifferent, unappreciative, even hostile, response. Yeats here may be compared with Jonson who constantly questioned both the worth of his audience and its reception of his work.

This theme recurs in "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing" (1913). The friend whose gift is scorned is Lady Gregory while the

intended recipient is merely "any brazen throat." Harold Bloom detects Jonson's influence in the "epigrammatic strength and stoic knowingness" of the poem which he calls "Yeats's most enduring tribute to his indispensable patroness" (173), a description which emphasizes that Yeats shared with Lady Gregory the kind of relationship which Jonson celebrated so often.

Finally, the Paudeen mentality is seen in yet another light in "To a Shade" (1913). This time Yeats's rage was inspired by the shabby treatment which Parnell received from his countrymen. Daniel Harris discerns a parallel between the opening lines,

> If you have revisited the town, thin Shade,
> Whether to look upon your monument
> (I wonder if the builder has been paid)
> (CP, 123);

and the following lines from Jonson's "To Sir Robert Wroth":

> Nor throng'st (when masquing is) to have a sight
> Of the short braverie of the night;
> To view the jewells, stuffes, the paines, the wit
> There wasted, some not paid for yet!
> (9-12, Poems, ed. Johnston, 79; Harris, 69)

In addition, the opposition between the city and the country which is the basis of Jonson's poem is repeated in Yeats's, where Parnell is destroyed by the foul treatment of the town. Further, Yeats's description of Parnell as "a man / Of your own passionate serving kind" is reminiscent of Jonson's portrait of Wroth whom he advises to do his "country service" and not fear approaching death (103-06), even as Yeats orders the shade of Parnell to return to the peace of the Glasnevin countryside which extends to the dead as well as the living.

Considered together, along with the style and general intent of these poems, Yeats's allusions to Jonson's works almost certainly ensure

that he was writing with Jonson in view. With the completion of the volume in 1913, the types which had been so clearly distinguished in "To a Wealthy Man" (1912) and captured there in the Paudeen-Biddy caricature, along with the figures recalled from the Italian Renaissance, were fully accommodated within Yeats's own world. Having established their type, Yeats had no further need to identify the Paudeens explicitly: their ignobility spoke for itself. Similarly, in the poems of 1913 it was unnecessary for him to reach out to the Italian Renaissance for images of their opposite: they were available within his own world--in the soldiers who fought for Ireland, the friend who only seems to have been defeated and the memory of Parnell whose ghost puts his survivors to shame. Thus, it is possible to observe Yeats transforming his world into a mythological place inhabited by heroic figures who live on through the immortality of their personalities.

This tendency to invest his world with significance is important to the satirist who must be able to project a vision of his ideal upon his real world. But its function extends beyond satire. Because that significance connects his world to a larger world of value and meaning, it allows Yeats to use other conventions and techniques, like those associated with the country house genre. This later use of those conventions to expand the significance of Coole largely depends upon the values which he associates with the lives led there by the Gregories which are the same values which made the satire of Poems Written in Discouragement possible.

Yeats finally acknowledged his debt to Jonson, as well as his desire to be identified with him, in his open borrowing from the

Apologetical Dialogue from The Poetaster and "An Ode: To himselfe" (The Under-wood XXIII) in the tailpiece to Responsibilities. Yeats had first expressed an interest in Poetaster in his letter to Bullen of September 1906 where he demonstrated a knowledge of the play and the intricacies of its argument:

> Is there any possibility that Jonson meant Shakespeare not Chapman by the character of Virgil in The Poetaster? I find it hard to believe that the few not too lively plays written by Chapman before that date could have made Jonson say as he does that whatever event of life came upon one, one could find appropriate words for it in the writings of 'Virgil ' (Letter to A. H. Bullen, 21 September 1906, L, 479)

Indeed, it is probable that even at that early date Yeats recognized a parallel between Jonson's situation and his own. At any rate, Poetaster made a deep impression upon him. He first referred to it in his own Discoveries in that same autumn of 1906 and recalled its lines on various occasions for the next thirty years. These continuing references, as well as his direct acknowledgement of the play's value, testify to its special importance and mark it as an influence of outstanding significance.

Those who comment on Yeats's public acknowledgement of Jonson include Donald Davie, Thomas McAlindon, Daniel Harris and Peter Allt. While Davie notes its importance as "the announcement of a new phase in Yeats's career" ("Yeats, the Master of a Trade," in Integrity, 62-63), McAlindon and Harris point to analogies between Yeats's dispute with George Moore and Jonson's involvement with Marston, Dekker and others in the Stage Quarrel which resulted in the composition of Poetaster. Indeed, Harris pronounces "the allegorical logic . . . inexorable" (68).

Yeats's poem was specifically provoked by the publication of excerpts from George Moore's Hail and Farewell in the English Review. Yeats recorded his version of Moore's "outrageous article" in a section of his

Journal omitted from Autobiographies where he writes that Moore had turned an "appeal to the Irish aristocracy to support Lane's gallery . . . into an attack on the middle classes" (Memoirs, ed. Donoghue, 269). Moreover, it is clear from his description of Moore himself that he belonged with those whom Yeats had attacked throughout Responsibilities for their inability to appreciate art:

> Moore . . . is the born demagogue and in nothing more than in his love of the wealthy. He has always a passion for some crowd, is always deliberately inciting them against somebody. He shares the mob's materialism and the mob's hatred of any privilege which is an incommunicable gift. (270)[21]

In the midst of the controversy, in which Lady Gregory's threat of court action resulted in an apology from Moore and a retraction of portions of his article, Yeats revealed his conscious self-identification with Jonson and Jonson's attitudes:

> The word 'bourgeois' which I had used [in a speech at a lecture of Moore's which provided a focus for Moore's subsequent criticism] is not an aristocratic term of reproach, but, like the old 'cit' which one finds in Ben Jonson, a word of artistic usage. (270)

This remark which demonstrates Yeats's awareness of Jonson's careful use of language as well as a close familiarity with his works also points to his assumption that he shared Jonson's critical stance. That is, he assumed that Jonson, too, had criticized as an artist, not an aristocrat. Thus, in Yeats's view, Moore's insults stemmed from a basic misunderstanding of Yeats's position, as Moore mistook what Yeats claimed to be a defense made in the name of art for a general attack on a particular social class.

According to Jonson, disengagement and retreat to splendid isolation--alone, high and aloof--appear to be the most appropriate responses to the mass of inferior criticism which, like evil, may be controlled but never totally eradicated. Yeats's attempt at such a response in the tailpiece has received a mixed response from recent commentators. With others, including Whitaker (158) and Bloom (176-77), Daniel Harris disputes the effectiveness of Yeats's forgiveness and attempted withdrawal. He judges that Yeats's response cannot match Jonson's, in spite of his invocation, because he cannot actually get to Coole:

> He wishes he could, but cannot; "Ben Jonson's phrase" seethes with ferocity precisely because he has only verbal analogies to use in self-defense. Coole, its bust of Maecenas in the garden, remains excruciatingly distant; and the poem thus becomes . . . the most unusual country house poem in the genre: its speaker must sing Coole's praises from afar. (68)

Several years earlier, however, Peter Allt remarked that "what chiefly distinguishes Jonson and the Yeats of Responsibilities" from late Victorians and the early Yeats is "not the impulse of retreat so much as the manner in which it is stated: the contemptuous strength and the strangely triumphant contempt" (23) while more recently, Thomas McAlindon has similarly observed that

> Yeats's epilogue, with its firm purpose of insulting while formally forgiving, with its pose of manly yet refined indifference, and its devastating contrast of choice, aristocratic friends and squalid enemies, vividly re-enacts the characteristic attitudes of Jonson's two plays [Poetaster and Cynthia's Revels]. (167)

At the very least, the tailpiece represents Yeats's attempt to re-enact Jonson's attitude. Certainly McAlindon's remark emphasizes the element of forgiveness in Yeats's response--"I can forgive even that wrong of wrongs"--for which Yeats was indebted, not to the Apologetical Dialogue, but, as McAlindon notes, to the speech from Poetaster "where

Horace (Jonson) simultaneously forgives and affronts his backbiting rival Crispinus (Marston)" (167):

> If this be all; faith I forgive thee freely.
> Envy me still, so long as Virgil loves me,
> Gallus, Tibullus and the best-best Caesar
> My dear Mecoenas; while these, with many more,
> (Whose names I wisely slip) shall think me worthy,
> Their honour'd and ador'd societie,
> And reade, and love, prove and applaud my poemes;
> I would not wish but such as you should spight them.
> (Poetaster, V, iii, 455-462; cited by McAlindon, 165)

That is, the tailpiece provides an indication of the attitude which Yeats hoped to maintain in the face of an increasingly hostile world. Whether or not he was successful, indeed whether or not Jonson had succeeded before him, is ultimately less important than the fact that he persisted in his efforts to invest his world with the values of a social order which had sustained poets and artists in the face of attacks by unworthy detractors.

In general, Yeats's interest in Poetaster was sustained by his continuing concern with the artist's relationship to his public, not only with the role which that public would force the artist to adopt, but also with the ways in which the artist must attempt to reach that public. Because the artist must be an innovator and leader, rather than an imitator and follower, it is appropriate to find him with the rulers at Caesar's court. As is fitting, the artist establishes values and is answerable only to those whose knowledge equips them to judge according to merit. The artist must seek the patronage of those who offer it with intelligence, not with spite or for social affectation. The message of Jonson's plays is confirmed in Timber; or Discoveries where he observes that "to judge of Poets is only the facultie of Poets; and not of all Poets, but the best"

(2578-79), while in his Introduction to Essays and Introductions Yeats elaborates on the nature of the relationship to his public which the best poet must enjoy:

> a poet is justified not by the expression of himself, but by the public he finds or creates; a public made by others ready to his hand if he is a mere popular poet, but a new public, a new form of life, if he is a man of genius. (x)

Among his contemporaries, Yeats sought the company of those with like convictions, especially those who gathered under the ancient roof at Kyle-na-no, who, like Jonson, chose to retire rather than capitulate and were willing to do battle rather than give up their principles. Lady Gregory's remarks in Our Irish Theatre (New York: Putnam, 1913) reveal that she, like Yeats, believed that when sacrifice is demanded by those unworthy to receive it, it must be denied. For example, she has recorded that the plays at the Abbey Theatre were chosen because they did not offend only in so far as that choice could be made without sacrificing basic principles:

> it is hard to hold one's own against those one is living amongst, I have found that; and I have found that peace comes, not from trying to please one's neighbours but in keeping one's mind on the right path and then keeping to it. (49)

Further, she notes that those at the Abbey were continually forced to meet with "journalists and politicians [who] looked for their judges among their inferiors, and assumed those opinions and passions that moved the largest number of men" (63-4). Her remarks confirm the parallel between Yeats's experience at the Abbey and the attitude which he knew he must maintain, and the much earlier struggles which resulted in Jonson's determination to "sing high and aloofe, / Safe from the wolves black jaw, and the dull Asses hoofe." Similarly Synge, who had also visited Coole,

whose speech Yeats had found "so rammed with life" even as Virgil's poetry had been so described in Poetaster (V, i), was most nearly the ideal artist who made no concessions to his public: "he was that rare, that distinguished, that most noble thing, which of all things still of the world is nearest to being sufficient to itself, the pure artist" ("J. M. Synge and the Ireland of his Time," E&I, 335, 323).

Thus, it is not difficult to perceive the analogy between Coole and the Renaissance residences celebrated by Jonson which contributed to Yeats's later poetic tributes to Coole. In addition, it is apparent here that Yeats attempted to exalt his own position and increase the effectiveness of his satire by associating himself with such Renaissance figures as Jonson and Erasmus. By identifying their values with what was important to him--Coole, Fame, ancient ceremony, precious things--and assuming that he and his predecessors shared a common enemy, he established the basis for his use of their attacks to damn his own detractors. The tailpiece in fact marks the culmination of one phase of Yeats's development as a satirist during which Yeats looked to Renaissance masters, especially Ben Jonson, for guidance. Indeed, in view of his difficulties at the Abbey and his disillusionment with the Irish people as a result of the Parnell controversy and the refusal of the Lane pictures, it is little wonder that Yeats looked back with interest, and with some longing, to a society that, for all its hostility to men like Jonson, continued to sustain an embodiment of the social forms which were tangible reminders of the ideal of life which stood behind their work.

d) Coole and After

Yeats first expressed an interest in "the ideal of life that flitted before the imagination of Jonson and the others when they thought of the court" in his letter to A. H. Bullen in September 1906. This is the same letter in which he first mentioned Poetaster which, like Cynthia's Revels, contains an ideal court in which the values of poetry and the virtues of the poet are recognized and praised. In this letter Yeats also sought information about "the various people the plays are dedicated to, and the various ladies one lights upon in Ben Jonson's Masques" (L, 478-79). Thus the letter is a definite acknowledgement that by 1906 the ideals of the Renaissance which Yeats wished to explore in the twentieth century were being clarified and brought into focus through his familiarity with the personality and work of Ben Jonson. Also, Yeats's comment that the "thought grows out of my Spenser essay" locates Yeats's approach to Jonson in research for "Edmund Spenser." That research convinced him that Jonson was the more relevant literary predecessor since he, like Yeats, had had to contend with hostile social forces which had barely begun to appear in Spenser's time. But while realization of that "ideal of life" remained a distinct possibility for Jonson and vestiges of the social forms originally designed to embody it were still evident in his time, for Yeats, that ideal could only exist in the imagination and in the world at Coole which was the product of that imagination. Thus while Jonson's various representations of that ideal served as direct social commentaries, that same ideal functioned indirectly for Yeats, largely in

his poems of social satire in the Green Helmet-Responsibilities period and in his Coole Park poems. Indeed, it was important because it provided Yeats with a pattern through which he could give shape, and potentially, meaning to his own life. Its significance in this regard was perhaps most evident on possibly the most public occasion of Yeats's life, the presentation of the Nobel Prize, when Yeats spoke of his public career in the theatre, of other members of his private social and artistic aristocracy, and of social order. In the light of his remarks to Bullen years earlier, it is not surprising that the occasion was momentous for Yeats: "I who have never seen a court," he confessed, "find myself moved as if by some religious ceremony . . ." (A, 544). Most effectively, he recalled thoughts of the court at Urbino, and finally the address which Ben Jonson had made to the court of his time in the Dedication to Cynthia's Revels:

> 'Thou art a beautiful and brave spring and waterest all the noble plants of this Island. In thee the whole Kingdom dresseth itself and is ambitious to use thee as her glass. Beware then thou render man's figures truly and teach them no less to hate their deformities, than to love their forms. . . . Thy servant but not slave, Ben Jonson.' (A, 545-46)

Undoubtedly, as Harris notes, Yeats was attracted by the tone of Jonson's conclusion, with its "decorous and self-respecting pride," as well as his idea that the court provided the nation with a model of imitation (73). Certainly Yeats proceeded to use his idea of the court, which had been significantly shaped by his knowledge of Jonson, in his own distinctive manner: "now I begin to imagine some equivalent gathering to that about me, called together by the heads of some State where every democratic dream had been fulfilled . . ." (546). Yet in spite of its possibilities, Yeats recognized that the "democratic dream" would eventually fail:

tradition would ultimately assume its rightful place. His wandering thoughts led him to the art of Japan which illustrates, through analogy, how Jonson's description of the court was useful to him. "May it not have been possible," he speculated, "that the use of the mask in acting, and the omission from painting of the cast shadow, by making observation and experience of life less important, and imagination and tradition more, made the arts transmittable and teachable" (548). Similarly, when he applied the ideal of life that flitted before the Renaissance imagination to his experience at Coole it served as a mask allowing him to connect that experience to tradition and expose it to the transmission of meaning from past to present and future.

Lady Gregory's estate at Coole was clearly in Yeats's mind throughout this portion of "The Bounty of Sweden":

> Then my memory had gone back twenty years to that summer when a friend read out to me at the end of each day's work Castiglione's commendations and descriptions of the court of Urbino . . . and I remembered a cry of Bembo's made years after, 'Would that I were a shepherd that I might look down daily upon Urbino.' I had repeated to myself what I could remember of Ben Jonson's address to the Court of his time, 'Thou art a beautiful and brave spring. . . .' (A, 545)

For some years it was generally accepted that this remark established the date of Yeats's first reading of Castiglione at 1903. More recently evidence has placed that reading in 1906, the year of Yeats's Discoveries and his letter to Bullen (see Harris, 5). At any event, this remark points back to the early years of the century when Yeats was beginning to explore his interest in the Renaissance. His attention to Castiglione and Urbino complements his investigations into the court of Renaissance England through Ben Jonson's works, as is clearly evident from "The Bounty of Sweden" and two earlier poems, "To a Wealthy Man . . ." and "The People."

Ultimately, however, Jonson's influence was stronger, even though Urbino continued to serve as an important image of Renaissance society. And certainly, Yeats's attention to both provides evidence of his early desire to invest Lady Gregory's estate at Coole with traditional values.

Comparisons between Yeats's Coole Park poems and Jonson's "To Penshurst" have been suggested by several commentators, including Harris, McAlindon, Perloff, Rajan and Charles Tomlinson. While Perloff acknowledges Tomlinson's observation that "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" stands "at the end of the line of country house poems which begins with Jonson's 'To Penshurst'" (HG, 2) she herself emphasizes what she calls the "very special relationship" between that poem and Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" which, although a member of the tradition of the country house poem, lies outside the limits of this study ("Theme and Convention in 'Coole Park and Ballylee,'" 223).

Like Tomlinson, McAlindon declares that Jonson's poem "initiated a special literary type, the Great House poem, of which 'Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931' is the last and, may be, the most distinguished representative" (167). For him, "To Penshurst" is Jonson's "most extended and imaginative treatment of the ideal of aristocratic permanence," an ideal which he suggests is "as profoundly felt in Yeats's poetry as in Jonson's" and was, for Yeats, closely related to the rootedness which he hoped his children would find and which he discovered in John Synge (168).

Rajan draws attention to the Jonsonian ambience of Yeats's poems about the Gregories and their house with his passing remark that "Coole Park is also Penshurst, briefly graced by 'Our Sidney and our perfect man'

. . ." ("Yeats and the Renaissance," 114). That ambience, and many other aspects of Jonson's influence, are considered in some detail in Daniel Harris's major examination of the places that were important to Yeats, in Coole Park and Ballylee. Although chapter three, "Coole Transformed: Yeats's use of the Country House Poem" (51-86), is most relevant, Harris devotes considerable attention throughout his book to Yeats's use of the conventions established by Jonson. Moreover, while he concludes that Yeats's poems are "'about' something quite different from Jonson's" (85), he credits Jonson with an important contribution to Yeats's life and work.

For Harris, Yeats's distinctiveness emerges most clearly in the 'tower' poems which manifest "in ways which Jonson did not conceive" the correspondence between mind and house on which the country house genre is founded:

> the unassailable difference between Penshurst and Thoor Ballylee is not architectural. It is, rather, that the tower is a kinetic, not a static symbol; it alters shape and character according to the speaker's emotional condition, both from poem to poem and within a single poem. (81)

Similarly, Coole is never completely defined in any one poem. Instead, it emerges from a gradual increase in his speaker's awareness of its architecture and interiors: "Yeats's interior details have just enough definition to ensure that their indefiniteness matters. The ultimate correlative of this indefiniteness is mystery; and that, finally, is what Coole possesses and Penshurst lacks" (79, 80-81).

In general, Harris's exploration of Yeats's use of the country house genre, while revealing many similarities, points to major distinctions between the two poets. He finds, for example, an "interplay" between mind and house in Yeats's poems which is limited to "correspondence" in

Jonson's (81). Yeats's poems are more personal, more occasional, more temporal. On the other hand, Jonson, as an omniscient observer, uses an 'eternal' present to describe an ideal world which he "has made, but never experienced" (82). He is "a voice, not an actor" (83) using logic to assert the objective existence of his world. By contrast, Yeats's speakers make a radically subjective, dramatic discovery of a world which reflects a fallible human mind (83-84). As Harris concludes,

> Yeats's unrelenting emphasis on dynamic energy, on movement in the mind and body of his speaker, constitutes his major modification of Jonson's form. He accepted what Jonson sought but chiefly evaded, the historical reality of the country house. (85)

These distinctions, however, apply not only to country house poems, but also to other areas of comparison, as illustrated earlier with respect to prose. Thus, although Harris largely confines himself to the country house poems his basic assumptions may be transposed to other areas of influence. That is, having suggested that Yeats's poems offer the living criticism of Jonson's poetry which T. S. Eliot sought, and having observed that Yeats's poems "clarify the nature of Jonson's work" even as Jonson's "put Yeats's in perspective" (81), Harris points to the kind of mutual exchange which is, in fact, apparent in all areas of comparison between the two poets.

Yeats appears to have first recognized the potential of the conventions of the country house poem in the years between 1900 and 1909 when his interest in Jonson and the Renaissance in general was running high. His first attempts to express the significance of Lady Gregory's estate in his poetry in, "I walked among the seven woods of Coole" (1900) and "In the Seven Woods" (1902) bear little relation to the genre. In the first especially, Yeats's speaker is a typical, post-Romantic figure attempting

to perceive meaning and order in the mysterious woods which surround him. There is no reference to Coole House or its inhabitants who become the focus of subsequent poems. There is, however, an essentially Romantic identification of the speaker's bewilderment and the mystery of the woods which establishes the subjectivity of Yeats's relationship to Coole which persists through the later Coole Park poems and is partially responsible for the distinctiveness of Yeats's twentieth-century use of the genre.

Additional insight into Yeats's adoption of the convention is provided in portions of the Journal for 1909 published by Donoghue in Memoirs, where he has recorded his growing awareness of the value of the house, the importance of Lady Gregory and her family, the significance of the aristocratic way of life which they preserved within the house, and, the reality that that way of life was about to be destroyed. The entries themselves often serve as prose drafts of poems which appeared in The Green Helmet and Other Poems and Responsibilities as well as later volumes. As mentioned above, they offer proof of Yeats's consistent use of a method of composition similar to that reported to have been favoured by Jonson at a time when his poems themselves most clearly reflect his considerable debt to Jonson. Of particular interest at this point are Yeats's drafts of "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation" (1909) in entries 180 and 181 of his Journal for August 1909 (Memoirs, 225-26). Most obviously, these entries confirm that "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation" is an occasional poem, written after the courts had lowered the rents at Coole and effectively reduced Lady Gregory's income and ability to maintain the estate.[22] While there is no direct reference to

the measures which provoked its composition in the poem itself, its title emphasizes the occasional nature of the poem by specifying the particular cause of the change which had shaken, but not yet destroyed, the house.[23] In addition, the present title provides some measure of anonymity to the house so that it is representative of all the great houses endangered by the increasingly severe government regulations. Thus, "Upon a House" stands as one of Yeats's first attempts to give public significance to his private world through his poetry.

Further, these entries reveal that in the final poem Yeats followed his drafts, both prose and verse, very closely. Thomas Parkinson points out that the drafts of the 1909-13 diary are more detailed than those still extant for many later poems (W. B. Yeats: The Later Poetry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) 81). Certainly entry 180 provides a full outline of intentions which were satisfied in the poem which followed. The absence of major changes in the verse draft of entry 181 suggests that the poem was written easily with only the last lines presenting difficulties. The earlier prose draft, like the poem itself, consists of a series of rhetorical questions which suggests that from the first Yeats had intended to use the interrogative form to assert the irrefutability of Coole's excellence, right down to "Time's last gift," even though the artifice of those questions is also an acknowledgement of the hostile forces whose gathering strength is a continuing threat to Coole's existence.

Finally, earlier and later remarks reveal that the poem emerged from deeply felt, personal concerns, related to Yeats's own life and work, as well as the fate of Coole. They illustrate on the one hand, that Yeats's

fears for Coole were a reflection of his fears for himself. On the other, they show that the qualities which seemed to emanate from Coole making it important to him, also characterized his other ideals. His attitude to Coole was thus highly subjective and closely related to other aspects of his life and work. For example, his remark in line 2, that in that house "passion and precision have been one," is also an identification of a long-sought goal for his own work. Although the line is clearly related to the observation in Journal entry 180 that power has "gone forth or lingered, giving energy, precision," both remarks echo the summary of his talk on "Contemporary Lyric Poetry" in a preceding entry:

> I shall . . . explain how, coming after the abundance of the Swinburne-Rossetti-Morris movement, we sought not abundance or energy, but preciseness of form. We were the second wave of the movement and had more passion because more confidence than the first. . . . We sought for a new subject matter, and many of us were men of passionate living, expressing our lives. (224-25) (emphasis mine)

At the same time, the remarks which follow the verse draft in entry 181 point to the appropriateness of Yeats's appeal to the Renaissance by confirming the validity of regarding Yeats's Coole Park poems as members of the country house genre. They establish the importance of the house as an embodiment of values or, more particularly, a form for the fostering of values, with a definite place in society, for which the conventions of the country house genre provide technical equivalents:

> One feels always that where all must make their living they will live not for the life's sake but the work's, and all be the poorer. My work is very near to life itself, but I am always feeling a lack of life's own values behind my thought. They should have been there before the strain began, before it became necessary to let the work create its values. This house has enriched my soul out of measure, because here life moves without restraint through spacious forms. Here there has been no compelled labour, no poverty-thwarted impulse. (226)

Thus if Penshurst represents the norm for Yeats, as G. H. Hibbard believes it did for Jonson--"the values he believes in are embodied in it" ("The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century" in Essential Articles for the Study of Alexander Pope, ed. Maynard Mack, Rev. ed. (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1968) 441)--it may be regarded in Yeats's terms as an ideal form for life. It is thus possible to see how the implicit comparison between Penshurst and Coole which accompanies the analysis of Yeats's poems as country house poems, reveals the sense of strain which Yeats identified in this passage from his Journal and is ultimately what he must communicate about his relationship to Coole, or any twentieth-century relationship to a traditionally acceptable standard. That is, it is Yeats's deviation from the norm established by Jonson which both reveals the character of the modern strain and isolates the meaning which remains.

Moreover, each of the Coole poems contributes to Yeats's apprehension of that meaning. "Coole Park, 1929" and "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" are richer because of "Upon a House . . .," "The New Faces" and the tailpiece to Responsibilities and other poems about Coole which are themselves enhanced by their presence in a sequence. In addition each represents an advance in Yeats's application of the conventions of the country house poem to Coole.

In "The New Faces," for example, the emphasis shifts from the house to the people who inhabit it in, as Yeats imagines, both past and future. Memories from the speaker's past (present) connect the house to the tradition established by Penshurst, while thoughts of the present (future) anticipate a new order. As Daniel Harris concludes:

> "The New Faces" deviates radically from the conventions of the country house poem. From Jonson through Pope the house gives architectural form to its inhabitants' courtesy and taste; here, the pointed discrepancy between the house and its new possessors brutally dramatizes their corruption. (64)

That is, "The New Faces" illustrates how Yeats used the conventions which descended from Jonson to expose the distance between his ideal and the actual conditions which he faced. Further, Harris's suggestion that the distinction between "The New Faces" and "Upon a House . . ." which lies in the assumption that values once dependent on co-existence with the house which shelters them, as in "Upon a House . . .," can be wholly carried on in the mind, as in "The New Faces" (65), points to yet another modern modification of the genre which speaks to the ability of conventions to carry meaning in the twentieth century.

In addition, other aspects of "The New Faces" point to other, more specific debts to Jonson. With respect to the discrepancy which Harris observes between the house and its new possessors, Harris's suggestion that Yeats may have been "remotely inspired by The Alchemist" where Subtle and his crew "make a shambles" of Lovewit's house (64, n. 25), has possibly more validity than he admits. Although he remarks that "there is nothing like this in the genre of the country house poem," the fact that "The New Faces" was written during the period when Jonson's influence was generally apparent in Yeats's poem argues for the relevance of Jonson's play to the composition of this particular poem. Certainly Yeats would not have been deterred by the unorthodoxy of its effect on the conventions of the country house poem. Moreover, as Harris further suggests, the "ill-bred breed" which take over Coole in Yeats's imagination is like Face in The Alchemist, "all face," playing "'tricks' not plays" (64).

Certainly the word "faces" in the title and in line 6 seems a deliberate allusion to Jonson's character.

Further, Harris's later suggestion that the phrase "break the teeth of Time" is a variation of Jonson's image, "stryke the eare of tyme" in "Yff Men, and tymes were nowe" (Poems, ed. Johnston, 316) provides additional evidence of Yeats's interest in Jonson during its composition. Indeed the reference to "Face" in line 2,

> Yff Men, and tymes were nowe
> Of that true Face
> As when they both were greate . . .,

as well as the appeal to both past and future time suggest that Yeats's poem may be a general reminiscence of Jonson's Ode. Moreover, Nicholl's suggestion that Yeats remembered the concluding lines of stanza one,

> I then could rayse my notes
> Lowd to the wondringe thronge
> And better Blason them, then all their Coates,
> That were the happie subject of my songe,

during composition of his own "A Coat" argues further for Yeats's familiarity with the Ode (162).[24]

With its focus on the inhabitants at Coole, old rooms, shadows, the garden, and especially the trees--catalpa and scented lime--"The New Faces" anticipates Yeats's final tributes to Coole, especially in "Coole Park, 1929" and Purgatory. It illustrates, perhaps best of all the early poems, that Yeats's poems about Coole do in fact belong in a sequence, which reflects Yeats's growing realization of its impending doom.

Moreover that sequence is significantly punctuated by his acknowledgement of "Ben Jonson's phrase" in the tailpiece to Responsibilities. In addition to identifying the source of his satiric attitude, Yeats's remark also locates the source of his model for Coole. He sees its

"ancient roof" as an equivalent to Penshurst as "an ancient pile" (Harris, 67). Indeed, just as "To Penshurst" served Jonson as, in G. R. Hibbard's words, "The fullest statement . . . of that traditional piety which is the basis of his satire" (447), so it is clear that Yeats's admiration for Coole as a country house provides the basis for his satiric attacks on Moore and others of his ilk. Here again Jonson's influence predominates over Renaissance figures, including Milton and Erasmus. And again his influence stems from more than one source. Although the most obvious here are Poetaster and "An Ode to himself," "To Penshurst" also contributes, as well as poems like "Inviting a Friend to Supper" (Epigramme Cl) which for Harris is among the models "for Coole's ambience of courteous moral discourse" (67). Thus, the significance of Coole is further enriched as it clearly comes to function as a haven for Yeats, serving as a source of personal strength in the midst of public hostility.

When "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation" was written, the final dissolution of Coole was more than twenty years away. The potentiality of the conventions of the country house poem could not yet be exploited. However, indications that Yeats already knew where future strategies ought to be applied are provided in a subsequent poem, also from the Green Helmet volume, "These are the Clouds" (1910), where the focus shifts from the house at Coole to its owner, foreshadowing the "moment's memory to that laurelled head" at the conclusion of "Coole Park, 1929." A gloss for "These are the Clouds" and perhaps an explanation of its origin is provided by Yeats's Journal entry for September 16, 1909 which opens with a description of Lady Gregory's concern for the future:

> Two days ago Lady Gregory said, when they spoke of her grandchild's going to Harrow in 1921, 'Where will his grandmother be then?' I thought of this house, slowly perfecting itself and the life within it in ever-increasing intensity of labour, and then of its probably sinking away through courteous incompetence, or rather sheer weakness of will, for ability has not failed in young Gregory. . . . Is it not always the tragedy of the great and the strong that they see before the end the small and the weak, in friendship or in enmity, pushing them from their place and marring what they have built, and doing one or the other in mere lightness of mind? (229-30)

Here, then, is an early prose version of Yeats's lines describing contemporary Ireland,

> The weak lay hand on what the strong has done,
> Till that be tumbled that was lifted high
> And discord follow upon unison,
> Till all things at one common level lie,

as well as his characterization of Lady Gregory,

> . . . therefore, friend if your great race were run
> And these things came, so much the more thereby
> Have you made greatness your companion,
> Although it be for children that you sigh.
> (CP, 107-08)

In a footnote to the Journal entry, Denis Donoghue has included Yeats's pencilled comment, "Rhymes for poem: preparation, generation, station," adding that no such poem has survived (230, n. 5). It may be that the entry never became the poem Yeats intended, although it does seem to anticipate "These are the Clouds" with remarkable accuracy. In any event, it provides a valuable glimpse of Yeats's informal musings on the conditions which his poetic techniques, including his borrowings from the Renaissance, transformed into public poetry.

Moreover, it is apparent that Yeats regarded the house as a living organism, growing and changing with the life within it, yet dependent on that life for its survival. Indeed, the continuity which seems to be provided and ensured by the physical presence of the house is really pro-

vided by the continuity of the Gregory family. The house at Coole is, in fact, the physical embodiment of their lives and the values which they hold which can survive only as long as the Gregories can sustain them. Thus in order for Yeats to continue to use the conventions of the country house poem it was necessary for him to shift the symbolic value and meaning which those conventions have transmitted from the house to its owners. The impending destruction of Coole meant that one day he would no longer be able to rely upon the presence of the house to satisfy one of the most fundamental conditions of the genre: the actual existence of the ideal world that is praised. Thus in contrast to the Sidneys whose identity had been acknowledged by Jonson--"Sidney's copps" (l. 26), "all come in . . . / . . . to salute / Thy lord, and lady . . ." (ll. 48-50), ". . . thy lord dwells" (102)--yet kept subordinate to their house, the inhabitants of Coole play an increasingly important role in Yeats's public expressions of the significance of Coole.

The two great Renaissance influences which helped Yeats to shape his perception of the inhabitants of Coole were Castiglione's description of the court at Urbino, and Jonson's poetic tributes to the Sidneys and their house. As noted above, both influences date back to the early years of the century when Yeats was just beginning to recognize the importance of the Renaissance, and although both continued to be important to him, the English influence ultimately prevailed. Even so, a brief examination of Yeats's references to Urbino reveals that the Italian model both complemented and enhanced his ability to use the precedent offered by Ben Jonson.

In particular, allusions to The Courtier helped Yeats to characterize Lady Gregory's function in Irish society. She is implicitly present in "To a Wealthy Man . . ." when Duke Ercole is honoured as an exemplary patron of the arts, while his description of Guidobaldo and his court--

> That grammar school of courtesies
> Where wit and beauty learned their trade
> Upon Urbino's windy hill
>
> (CP, 120)--

provides a glimpse of the quality of life which Yeats found at Coole. More importantly, Jonson offered no equivalent to Castiglione's Duchess who presided over the gathered company at Urbino, "Where the Duchess and her people talked" ("The People," CP, 169), and clearly reminded Yeats of Lady Gregory. Indeed, when Lady Gregory was seriously ill in 1909, a parallel with the Duchess immediately came to mind:

> All Wednesday I heard Castiglione's phrase ringing in my memory, 'Never be it spoken without tears, the Duchess, too, is dead.' That slight phrase, which--coming where it did among the numbering of the dead--has often moved me till my eyes dimmed, and I felt his sorrow as though one saw the worth of life fade for ever [sic] (Memoirs, 163).

But in spite of the very personal associations which Castiglione's Courtier evoked in Yeats, the vision of the court which it presented to him was not sufficiently close to the life which he experienced at Coole, or to the traditions to which he could directly relate that life, to play a more pervasive role in his poetry. Thus, although Corinna Salvadori made a valid association between two locations when she declared that "Yeats found his Irish Urbino in Coole demesne . . ." (22), any suggestion that Yeats might have regarded Coole only in the light of the Italian model limits the significance of Coole. Coole's most important aspects to Yeats were beyond its scope and could more meaningfully be explored through the

analogy between Coole and Penshurst, the Gregories and the Sidneys, which is derived from precedents offered by the English tradition.

An analogy between the Gregories and the Sidneys operates in at least three of Yeats's major poems--"Shepherd and Goatherd," "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" and "The Municipal Gallery Revisited"--and is implicit throughout "Coole Park, 1929" and "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931," and wherever the conventions of the country house poem may be detected.

"Shepherd and Goatherd" (1918), Yeats's first poem on the death of Robert Gregory, has attracted critical attention as "a pastoral, modelled on what Virgil wrote for some friend of his and on what Spenser wrote of Sidney" (Letter to Lady Gregory, 19 March 1918, L., 647). For that reason it will be extensively treated in conjunction with Milton's Lycidas at a later point in this study. It must be mentioned here, however, because Yeats's remarks in letters to Lady Gregory confirm his perception of an analogy between the Gregories and the Sidneys, and, because "Shepherd and Goatherd" is itself a poem about Coole. In fact, Daniel Harris suggests that it, too, is a country house poem:

> Amidst the concluding images of restored order . . ., the most telling emblem of regeneration is the proposed movement toward Coole, the source of communal allegiances and the Jonsonian shelter for art and the artist's heirs, the imaginative and natural symbols of Gregory's perpetuation in time. Not simply a tactful expression of sorrow, the movement virtually metamorphoses "Shepherd and Goatherd" into a country house poem. (125)

Indeed, "Shepherd and Goatherd" is as much about the fate of Coole as the death of young Gregory since that death broke the line of inheritance within the Gregory family. The unnatural loss of youth before age meant

in actuality, in spite of references to Gregory's wife and children, that the fate of Coole would be sealed in Lady Gregory's lifetime. Robert's death, then, established more firmly the limits within which Yeats would have to use the conventions of the country house poem and marked a further advance towards realization of the fears of "These are the Clouds" and the ghostly speculation of "The New Faces."

Yeats's characterization of Robert Gregory as "Our Sidney and our perfect man" in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" (1918) serves as an even more significant extension of the analogy between the Gregories and the Sidneys. In addition, commentators have detected reminiscences of Ben Jonson at several points in Yeats's poem which further argue for the importance of Jonson's influence.

For example, both McAlindon and Harris suggest that the turning of a surname into a symbol may be traced to Jonson's funeral elegy "To the Immortall Memorie, and Friendship of that Noble Paire, Sir Lucius Cary, and Sir H. Morison":

> You liv'd to be the great surnames
> And titles, by which all made claimes
> Unto the Vertue. Nothing perfect done,
> But as a Cary or a Morison.
> (Poems, ed. Johnston, 214, ll. 113-16)

Further, while McAlindon notes that both poets praise the perfection of their subject (168), Harris detects a specific echo of Jonson's "Nothing perfect done" in Yeats's "And all he did done perfectly" (69-70). He observes that Jonson specifically used the Sidney name to symbolize the greatness of Lady Mary Wroth, daughter of Sir Robert Sidney, in Epigramme CIII--"Know you to be a Sydney . . ."--which is but one example

of a technique which he employed on several other occasions (70). Further, he suggests that the colloquial opening of Yeats's elegy,

> Now that we're almost settled in our house
> I'll name the friends that cannot sup with us
> Beside a fire of turf in th' ancient tower,

"ironically" recalls the "joyous, ceremonial beginning of Jonson's "Ode to Sir William Sydney, on his Birth-day": "Now that the hearth is crown'd with smiling fire" (70). In addition, he wonders if "While some burn damp faggots . . ." is an echo of "Or in small Fagots have him blaze about" from "An Execration Upon Vulcan" (l. 185) (70). Finally, he suggests that the communal dinner in "To Penshurst" and the toast to Sir William Sidney in the birthday ode serve as "analogues for the meal which [Yeats's] speaker's guests may now attend only as ghosts" (130).

Moreover, while Harris and Marjorie Perloff ("The Consolation Theme in Yeats's "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," MLQ, XXVII (1966),317) note how carefully Yeats qualified his allusion to Sidney in the epithet "Our Sidney . . ." (emphasis mine), with Harris detecting "just enough irony to reveal the speaker's knowledge of illusion" (127), McAlindon appears to have accepted the description at face value. In his comparison of Yeats's elegy and Jonson's Cary-Morison ode, he suggests that the dead hero of Jonson's ode is "clearly idealized with the Sidnean model in mind," while In Yeats's elegy, Sidney is "explicitly, the hero's mythical prototype" (168).

In addition to similarities between the two Sidnean heroes, McAlindon extends his comparison by pointing to a thematic parallel in the ideal of

perfect friendship between the living and the dead which is celebrated in both poems (168). McAlindon's conclusion, that it is "in no way improbable" that Yeats found "useful suggestions . . . in Jonson's ode" (169), is based on these and other parallels, as well as the fact that Yeats had consciously sought a model for his first elegy on Robert Gregory. Although he admits that there are reminiscences of other Renaissance elegies in Yeats's poem, including Spenser's poems on the death of Sidney and Cowley's "Ode on the Death of Mr. William Harvey," he remains convinced that other possible Renaissance influences merely "throw into relief its resemblences to Jonson's ode." Indeed, he suggests that any influence of the latter merely directs attention back to Jonson who was "Cowley's accepted master in many things" (169).[25]

Largely because most commentators discuss Yeats's elegy to Gregory in relation to Milton's Lycidas, "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" is also considered in some detail at a later point in this study. However, as McAlindon and Harris show, verbal and thematic parallels, as well as the mutual idealization of a Sidnean hero, confirm that Jonson's was the most important of all the Renaissance influences which may be detected in Yeats's poem. Moreover, the fact that the poem is also one of Yeats's earliest attempts to establish the significance of his tower home through his poetry begs comparison with poetic treatments of both Coole and Penshurst. Undoubtedly, as Harris and Perloff suggest, Yeats's use of Jonson was complicated by his awareness of twentieth-century realities. Here also, he almost certainly sought to exploit the differences between modern and Renaissance conditions to make a statement about his own time.

Thus, while Yeats honours Gregory's memory through association with Sidney, he also leaves it vulnerable to contrasts, even as the association of Coole with Penshurst emphasizes Coole's twentieth-century fate.

Finally, like Yeats's remarks in his early letters to Lady Gregory regarding the composition of "Shepherd and Goatherd," the images of "The Municipal Gallery Revisited" (1937) confirm that Spenser was an important catalyst in Yeats's apprehension of the analogy between the Gregories and the Sidneys. In itself, that analogy contributed to his recognition of Jonson's importance, while Spenser's remarks on the Earl of Leicester as Philip Sidney's patron pointed to the specific aspect of the analogy to which his interest in Castiglione could best contribute. One of the earliest indications of the way in which Spenser finally guided Yeats to Jonson is provided in "Edmund Spenser" (1902), where Yeats recalls the image from "The Ruines of Time" which Spenser used to illustrate his lament that unworthy men should have taken the place of the dead Earl. Borrowing from Spenser, he compares such men "to the fox--an unclean feeder--hiding in the lair 'the badger swept'" (E&I, 359-60). This image reappears at the conclusion of "Poetry and Tradition" (1906) where Yeats calls the new class that had arisen in Ireland, "the fox that crept into the badger's hole" (E&I, 260), and most memorably in "The Municipal Gallery Revisited":

> My medieval knees lack health until they bend,
> But in that woman, in that household where
> Honour had lived so long, all lacking found.
> Childless, I thought, 'My children may find here
> Deep-rooted things,' but never foresaw its end,
> "Now that that end is come I have not wept;
> No fox can foul the lair the badger swept."
> (CP, 368)

"The Municipal Gallery Revisited" is Yeats's final tribute to Coole, its owner and the collective achievements of those who gathered there. This allusion to Spenser's celebration of the Sidneys as aristocrats and patrons confirms the continuing value of the English tradition, from Spenser to Jonson, as a shaping force behind Yeats's aristocratic ideal. Ultimately, however, Jonson's influence superseded all others in scope and importance as the Gregories, as well as their life at Coole, received their most significant characterization through his adaptation of the conventions of the genre of the country house poem in "Coole Park, 1929" and "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931."

"Coole Park, 1929" and "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" mark the climax of Jonson's influence on Yeats's poetry and perhaps even the end of the influence of the country house poem in modern literature. Like all of Yeats's poems about Coole, these two poems depend upon recogni-

tion of certain fundamental assumptions, not the least of which is a particular view of what a country house actually is. Harris suggests that it is "a conservative structure; geographically, morally, politically . . . the centre of traditional society, unity of culture" (75). More fundamentally, the country house is the site of man's confrontation with nature. Thus, meditation on the house and its environs provides the poet with an opportunity to examine the values which it embodies, the society which it fosters, and the relationship between man and nature which it exemplifies. And yet, for all that the house itself is important, its importance ultimately depends upon its inhabitants, upon what Harris terms "the correspondence between aristocrat and architect" which allows the house to reflect "the spiritual and aesthetic values" of its inhabitants. That correspondence serves as the "basis" of the country house genre and is essential to Yeats's continuing use of its conventions (77).

"Coole Park, 1929" and "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" are genuinely occasional poems written after the sale of Coole to the Irish Land Commission in 1927. In both, Yeats looked back to the past, to consolidate the meaning of the house, its grounds and its inhabitants. In the early days, like those which stand behind the tailpiece to Responsibilities, Coole had clearly been a place of refuge where friends met and where the imagination could shape society according to the pattern of an ideal.

Although it is formally described in Dramatis Personae, the basis of Yeats's appreciation of Coole, and the extent to which the ideal of life which he sought was derived from the ideal of the Renaissance country house, particularly as it is represented in "To Penshurst," is perhaps better established in a passage from Yeats's Journal which provides a retrospective description of his first visit to Lady Gregory's home:

> I found at last what I had been seeking always, a life of order and of labour, where all outward things were the image of an inward life. . . . Those grey country houses, Lissadell, Hazelwood House, and the far, rarely seen tower of Markree, had always called to mind a life set amid natural beauty and the activities of servants and labourers who seemed themselves natural, as bird and tree are natural. . . . Here many generations and no uncultivated generation, had left the images of their service in the furniture, in statuary, in pictures, and in the outline of wood and of field. I think I was meant not for a master but for a servant, and that it has been my unhappiness to see the analytic faculty dissolve all those things that invite our service, and so it is that all images of service are dear to me. (Memoirs, 101-02)

Chief among the images of service which Yeats would see dissolve was Coole itself whose impending demise called forth these two Coole Park poems which accommodate both the meaning of Coole and the meaning of its destruction. The range and significance of these poems is in part derived from their generous appeal to literary conventions; for although they are occasional poems, they are also meditations, elegiac reminiscences, and country house poems. They are at once autobiographical poems of private significance in a personal context, and poems of public significance in a national and universal context. Most important of all the conventions which contribute to Yeats's poems are those of the country house genre. Before considering Yeats's specific use of those conventions in some detail, however, it is necessary to look more closely at Jonson's poem to see how it could help to shape Yeats's poetic expression of the life of order,

labour and service which he sought.

In Jonson's "To Penshurst" all things serve each other: nature serves man, man regards nature and knowing his place in the social order, serves and respects all of its members in every station. The relationship between natural and social order is the subject of the poem and also the basis of its structure. The description of the hierarchical order of nature in the first half (5-44) corresponds to the description of man's hierarchical society in the second half (45-98). The order of nature includes gods like Bacchus and Pan, and descends to vegetable life. Penshurst itself is fit to receive humble peasants and offer shelter to princes and kings. The house and its environs are the meeting point of man and nature, both in terms of the lives of the men who have used their art and nature's material to build a house to contain their activities, and the structure of the poem in which their lives are described. Thus, each half of the poem is an emblem of the other, while the structural centre of the poem, where the house is described, is emblematic of the pervasive correspondence of the elements of both halves of the poem:

> And though thy walls be of the countrey stone,
> They are rear'd with no mans ruine, no mans grone,
> There's none, that dwell about them, wish them downe;
> But all come in, the farmer, and the clowne:
> And no one empty-handed to salute
> Thy lord, and lady, though they have no sute.
> Some bring a capon, some a rural cake,
> Some nuts, some apples; some that thinke they make
> The better cheeses, bring 'hem; or else send
> By their ripe daughters, whom they would commend
> This way to husbands; and whose baskets beare
> An embleme of themselves, in plum, or peare.
> (Poems, ed. Johnston, 77, ll. 45-56)

Man's activities parallel or repeat those of nature, with nature's apparent co-operation. His art complements nature and the poem as a whole illustrates the maxim from Timber; or Discoveries that "without Art Nature can nere be perfect, & without Nature Art can clayme no being" (2503-04).

Thus, in view of both Yeats's confession that he sought a life where "outward things were the image of an inward life," and his remark that the great old houses always suggested to him "a life set amid natural beauty and the activities of servants and labourers who seemed themselves natural as bird and tree," his readers are justified in recalling "To Penshurst" and suspecting that his description of his first visit to Coole owes something to a knowledge of Jonson's poem. Such a suspicion is not totally implausible since he wrote his Autobiography in 1916-17, just after the appearance of Responsibilities which, of all Yeats's books of poetry, is the volume most strongly characterized by satiric attacks upon those elements in society which seemed most intent upon destroying the structures of relationship and service which Coole and Penshurst represented.

Further, just as Penshurst can sustain man's ordered society, so it is capable of fostering his creativity, and is itself the product of that creativity. Its great chestnut tree (12-14) is the meeting place of the Muses, and the poet is welcome at his lordship's table. The poet can thus boast that

> . . . the same beere, and bread, and self-same wine,
> That is his Lordships, shall be also mine.
> (Poems, ed. Johnston, 78, ll. 63-64)

At Penshurst hospitality and service are available to all. Similarly, the houses which Yeats recalls are filled with images of service that represent a tradition of such service. More particularly, Augusta Gregory is described as a feudal lady serving those under her care, and as a patron, fostering order and creativity.

Jonson's description of Penshurst succeeds as a representation of an ideal because the forces which would threaten it have been kept at bay, not by exclusion, but by controlled accommodation. "To Penshurst" is a poem of praise, unmarred by satiric attack or elegiac remembrance. No contrast between town and country, or between dissolute and purposeful country life, intrudes upon the harmony and excellence of Penshurst. The suggestion that Penshurst is an isolated and perhaps idealized world is made in the opening and closing lines of the poem through contrast with other buildings--"Thou art not . . . built to envious show . . ."--and again in its middle lines, in the description of the hospitality shown to the poet (61-64). That suggestion is confirmed with the predominance of positive elements throughout the poem, allowing it to function as a normative poem for an entire genre.

By contrast, Yeats's "Coole Park, 1929" serves as an explanation of the inability of the ideal to survive because of the dominance of negative elements seeking to destroy the ideal. Yeats salvages a broken ideal only by controlled accommodation. His observation, in the description of Coole from his Autobiography, that it has been his unhappiness to see the analytic faculty destroy those things which can be images of service, points to his recognition that the ideal which he sought was becoming increasingly different from the reality he found around him, and suggests

why he must use, but cannot totally embrace, the conventions of the country house genre as descended from "To Penshurst" in his own Coole Park poems written while the house he wished to celebrate was in the process of dissolution.

Yet both "Coole Park, 1929" and "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" are legitimate members of the country house genre. In both, Lady Gregory's house and grounds as well as the Gregory family itself have been invested with the values of a way of life analogous to that of the Sidneys and celebrated in the country house poems of the seventeenth century. Establishment of the continuity between Yeats's poems and the poems within the tradition begun with "To Penshurst" makes it possible for the significance of that tradition to enter Yeats's poems as well. Use of that tradition allowed Yeats to implicitly include the ideas of his middle years--1900 to 1915--in later poems and create, in poetic terms, the scene of an aristocratic society gathered at Coole. At the same time he was able to write poems explicitly about the demise of that house.

Reference to the conventions of the country house genre not only expands the meaning of Yeats's poems, it also contracts time. It allows Yeats to place the ideals of earlier years beside a later reality by capturing the past in the living convention of the country house poem and projecting that past into the future in his determination to keep his memories of the past alive. The meaning of Coole was enhanced by association with the Renaissance country house and could therefore be given expression in poetry through an appeal to the conventions of the country

house poem. The destruction of the house suggests not simply the failure of these conventions but of the whole view of order for which those conventions stand. It measures the contemporary world against a standard and by proclaiming the obsolescence of that standard makes it necessary to ask what other standards are possible.

As already noted, Yeats focused his concern for the future upon the house at Coole as early as 1909 in "Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation." That concern is also apparent in his Autobiography of 1916-17, his Journal for 1909 and Dramatis Personae, while in later poems, including "Meditations in Time of Civil War" (1921-22) and "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" (1919), he indirectly acknowledged that violence was destroying the way of life which he valued and had been fostered at Coole. But the Coole Park poems, particularly "Coole Park, 1929," are of special importance because they not only allowed Yeats to record what was happening around him and describe what it meant to him, but also allowed him to evaluate the whole of his social context in relation to another completed and ordered social context which was also his social ideal. In other words, Yeats's use of the conventions of the country house genre allowed one whole way of life, not just aspects of it, to be seen in relation to the seemingly unstructured complexity of his contemporary world. That is, the comparison of Coole with Penshurst allowed Yeats to compare the partial fulfillment of an ideal with the completely fulfilled ideal. Moreover, when Yeats came to write his poems he could appeal to these Renaissance conventions only as a post-Romantic, modern poet, attempting to use the structures of the past to give order and meaning to his own world. Thus, the most obvious characteristics of the Coole Park poems, such as their

elegiac quality, are typically post-Romantic characteristics, and when Renaissance methods and concepts are found, it is apparent that they have been given new meaning and significance through a distinctly modern usage.

"Coole Park, 1929" was the first of the two poems to be written. According to its prose draft, the house was to be described first, then those who gathered there, while the largest portion of the poem was to be devoted to the men and circumstances that had brought them to the house.[26] As it happens, the house is not directly described in the first stanza of the completed poem. References to its physical structure occur throughout, continually reinforcing its significance. Enough is said about the house in the first stanza to establish that it was the embodiment of a way of life and the centre of a community which was only possible because of the physical protection of the house and the "powerful character" of its owner. In the later poem, in particular, it is clear that the values associated with the house did not essentially belong to the house but had been conferred on it by the people who had frequented it. As is typical of a country house poem, the house is regarded as an extension of its owner's personality and her character is implicitly or explicitly evoked at all times.

After the reference in the title, the house is first mentioned in the second line of the poem--"an aged woman and her house." In the first stanza, the woman and the house appear as a pair and are part of an analogous sequence that includes "a swallow's flight," a sycamore and lime-tree that can not be seen in the night even though a "western cloud is luminous," "great works constructed there in nature's spite / For scholars and for poets after us," and "thoughts long knitted into a single thought."

Thus, the house exists in a significant relation to the nature which surrounds it. It is apparent here that while nature can provide images for man, those images are not from a nature that has been ordered by man, but from a nature that determines its own way, according to its own scheme, independent of man. This nature is evident to man primarily through its power to survive. Its only order seems to lie in the inevitability of its cycles. Such nature cannot give men order other than that associated with its cycles, nor can it serve as an emblem of man's order. Therein lies the fundamental difference between modern and Renaissance concepts of nature. To modern man, nature is a force which thwarts his efforts to build, create art and impose order and preserves her own secrets. Clouds, for example, prevent the moonlight from revealing the relatively near and accessible sycamore and lime-tree. As in "I walked among the Seven Woods of Coole," nature here is not an image of the order of things, but of man's inability to perceive order, even the order which he himself has imposed, in a world which dwarfs him. In the Renaissance, man's order seemed to present a powerful challenge to the forces of nature which, indeed, were often made to serve his will.

The lack of direction or meaning in nature is characterized elsewhere in "Coole Park, 1929" by the swallows' flight which is used in the third stanza to characterize the men who came to Lady Gregory's home to find direction and meaning. Again, Yeats uses an image from nature to illustrate man's untutored relation to meaning. Because man himself is not innately endowed with meaning, he must make meaning. As indicated in Yeats's opening stanza, the making of meaning is a deliberate and diffi-

cult task. Unity and coherence come only after great effort and even when achieved, must be sustained in the face of nature's unrelenting and cyclic tendency towards destruction and decay. Only a few, poets and scholars, will make the effort required to make and preserve meaning:

> Great works constructed there in nature's spite
> For scholars and for poets after us,
> Thoughts long knitted into a single thought,
> A dance-like glory that those walls begot.
> (CP, 274)

Yeats's "dance-like glory" is a tour de force, a fusion which has not occurred spontaneously, but has been made. "Glory" is a word favoured by the Romantics to describe a moment exalted above all others, separated in time and space and elevated in quality from ordinary experience, and yet also impermanent and ephemeral like a sudden light. "Dance-like" connects the phrase to Yeats's other uses of the dance and suggests an attempt to use art to organize experience so that it seems to be spontaneous and to apparently bring the flux of life under the control of ordered movement. This "dance-like glory" is the offspring of the walls of Coole. The word "begot" inevitably recalls the fertility of an ideal Renaissance scene. In "To Penshurst" the continuity and succession, and hence the future, of both man and nature, including the way of life at the house, are ensured by the continual promise of a new generation. Time is apparently conquered by the ability of man and nature to reproduce their own kind. By contrast, the walls at Coole beget only "dance-like glory," an unnatural and unique off-spring which, rather than ensuring continuity, emphasizes the passing of time and the impermanence of what man creates.

Both Jonson and Yeats employ technical devices to re-inforce their themes. In "To Penshurst" structure, diction and syntax contribute to a sense of security and permanence. Jonson insists upon the maintainenance of his ideal. No opportunity for doubt or question is allowed to remain unchallenged. Both are thwarted by the emphatic statements which open and close his poem. Because the subject or theme of Yeats's poem is not only doubt, but the certain knowledge of the destruction of the physical embodiment of his ideal, the same techniques would be inappropriate. The form of Yeats's poem has apparently been determined by his speaking persona, "I". "Coole Park, 1929" is a poem of personal significance in a private context, as well as a poem of public significance in a national and universal context. Its occasion has reference to Yeats's personal life, and its interpretation can be sustained on a personal level. Yet Yeats has also quite deliberately made the occasion a public one. He has invested the details of the situation with public meaning, not only by using language and imagery which lead outside the poem, but also by using language and references to which he himself has given public significance elsewhere in his work. For example, he has included a catalogue of his friends, each identified by names and a metaphorical epithet. In this way his friends are both connected to his private sphere and grouped in a manner which has symbolic significance for all. Later in the poem, these friends, figures of mythic proportions in stanza two, are immortalized as types--traveller, scholar and poet--with all vestiges of familiarity and individuality stripped from them.

With the completion of the second stanza, the philosophical basis of the poem becomes clear. In retrospect, life has seemed a drama and this episode at Coole, with a "scene well set and excellent company" (CP, 274), but one incident in a much larger show. Again, as in "dance-like glory," the quality of immortality that art can bring is felt. Through participation in drama, elevation into art or order can be achieved, but only for a time. At some point, the drama must end. The permanence implied in the philosophy behind the Renaissance poem is denied the modern poem. There, the spotlight must move from one act to another and the scene at Coole must go dark. The sequential structure of Yeats's poem, and behind that, of the acts of a play or the seasonal progress of nature, contrasts to the emblematic structure of Jonson's "To Penshurst." It is true that the theatre metaphor and all that it implies was also popular in the Renaissance, but for the purposes of this study, where the Renaissance is represented by Ben Jonson's poem, it must be regarded as an image of a counter-philosophy which embraces characteristics opposed to the philosophy behind the country house poem and so is capable of standing for the modern condition which looks to the Renaissance, its opposite, for the embodiment of its ideal.

Paradoxically, Yeats invoked the conventions of the country house genre to show that the 'permanence' of the house is only temporary. Because the permanence and continuity which seemed to be assured in the Renaissance are undermined when the genre is transferred to a modern context, Yeats's use of its conventions helps him to show that the ideals of his early years cannot be realized, and that, in any case, their potential

fulfillment was but a partial solution to the problem of finding a valid structure of meaning. His combination of those conventions with the theatre image allows him to illustrate the paradox of temporary permanence and, at the same time, to capture the meaning he has been able to make. That is, the theatre analogy which Yeats deliberately constructed allowed him to place the dissolution of Coole within a meaningful context. It enabled him to keep the seemingly meaningless violence which destroyed Coole outside the centre of his concern and raise the possibility that the ultimate fate of Coole may be regarded in theatrical terms, as cosmic comedy or tragedy.

Within the flux of movement at Coole the old woman, Lady Gregory, is the most stable object. Although this poem is to be a memorial to her, she is referred to only as "a woman." No tricks of artistry have been used to exalt her position so that the impermanence of her presence is minimized. Indeed, she seems the most capable of permanence. As the one who brought order and harmony and meaning, she is the one who nourished the inherited value of the house that is memorialized in the poem and it is her personality and character that are embodied in it. But even more important for the modern search for meaning, she is the one who endures even after the physical evidence of her presence--her house and her body--has deteriorated. Similarly, it is only the physical reality of the house which has deteriorated, not what it embodied which was a gift from its owners. The gathered company which assembled because of her has been suspended in time and survives in spite of time, not with its help. The artificiality of their suspension is almost overwhelming; yet the woman has endured and even seems to live. Even though she is shadowy like the types which remain, the memory of her evokes the power of the human will

pitted against the forces of nature and the apparently aimless and directionless movement of the life to which she brought order:

> They came like swallows and like swallows went,
> And yet a woman's powerful character
> Could keep a swallow to its first intent;
> And half a dozen in formation there,
> That seemed to whirl upon a compass-point,
> Found certainty upon the dreaming air,
> The intellectual sweetness of those lines
> That cut through time or cross it withershins.
> (CP, 274)

Her power to give direction and hence, make meaning, is not made visible so that it can disappear. It is not physical so that it can dissolve or be destroyed. Rather, her effect on those who came to Coole is apparent in the contrast between swallows flying aimlessly about a compass point, an image reminiscent of Donne, and swallows flying in an ordered formation as though they had "found certainty." The compass as a source of direction, now associated with the seventeenth-century Renaissance, contrasts with more intuitive modern guides and suggests, in another fashion, that Renaissance methods are inadequate in the modern world. Again, the centre does not hold. The certainty which those 'swallows' found was imparted by Lady Gregory herself and her power is described in terms of that which is indestructible, as invisible lines in air which have the power to cut through time, an invisible enemy.

Thus, what endures is not physical and cannot be seen. Those typical figures who come to dedicate a moment to her memory are apparently nameless and invisible also. They too have left behind what time and space can measure and capture. They have transcended nature's spite, but not come to terms with it so that while neither the sun nor the shade is

important to them, the continuing power of that sun and shade is expressed in the appeal to the senses which those forces of nature can still exert as the poem closes. The figures of the dedicators persist in the midst of physical ruin. The last stanza, in which physical decay is most emphasized, contains the most references to the house:

> Here, traveller, scholar, poet, take your stand
> When all those rooms and passages are gone,
> When nettles wave upon a shapeless mound
> And saplings root among the broken stone,
> And dedicate -- eyes bent upon the ground,
> Back turned upon the brightness of the sun
> And all the sensuality of the shade --
> A moment's memory to that laurelled head.
> (CP, 274)

Thus, the house lies in rubble. What was once shaped and whole, and intended for future generations is now shapeless and broken. The works of man are to be inherited by no one. They have been consumed by nature and only nature seems productive. Yet, it is the productivity of nature which gives an indication of the speaker's mood. The nettles which have grown testify to the ugliness of what remains of the house. They provide an illustration, not only of the place of the house in the hierarchy of things, but also of man's attempt to construct such a hierarchy and impose an order upon nature. Yet, saplings have also grown. Nature has begun a new cycle and to the extent that those saplings have received nourishment from the soil on which the house was built, they represent the possibility of new symbolic life.

In "Coole Park, 1929" Yeats demonstrated that it is possible to continue using poetic conventions even if their meaning includes the destruction of their physical embodiment. Like the will of Lady Gregory, the conventions of the country house genre are invisible. They remain

in the minds of men and their survival depends upon the will of men. Even the dedication of "a moment's memory to a laurelled head" is a contribution to their survival. By appealing to those conventions Yeats extended the meaning of both the conventions and his poem. Turning the destruction of the house into a compliment to the scope and force of Lady Gregory's spirit, he accomplished a metamorphosis which, in Daniel Harris's opinion, "Jonson would never have contemplated." For Harris, the transformation of Coole into rubble is "the last conceivable step in the Jonsonian scheme of correspondence between self and architecture" that is so fundamental to the country house genre (231). Yet "Coole Park, 1929" does not mark the end of Yeats's use of that genre. Subsequent references to great houses reveal that he pushed its conventions to further limits, taking that correspondence yet another step, past the destruction of architecture, towards the disintegration of self.

But before the house was completely destroyed Yeats wrote one more poem, "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931," in which he again attempted to express the significance of Coole. This second poem follows "Coole Park, 1929" in Collected Poems and may justifiably be discussed in conjunction with it since, as Thomas Parkinson records, Yeats once entertained the possibility of uniting the two, with the present stanzas four and five of the second appearing under the sub-title "The House" (The Later Poetry, 146).

Although the parameters of his use of the conventions of the country house genre had largely been established before he came to write the second poem, there are significant differences between the two as they now stand. Most notable is the inclusion in the second of Thoor Ballylee and the territory which joins it to Coole. Daniel Harris remarks that "such a

complementarity breaks dramatically with traditional country house poetry," observing that Jonson and his successors "typically acknowledge a second house, profane, which illuminates by negative comparison, the virtues of the house they celebrate" (232). Here, however, Coole, the tower and "Raftery's 'cellar'" are brought together to provide an historical review of the phase of civilization which came to fruition at Coole. "Raftery's 'cellar'" which Harris calls "the natural, chthonic house from whose eternal forms of consciousness civilization springs" (232), is also an analogue for the Arab tent at the close of stanza five. "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" is more private than "Coole Park, 1929," because it includes Yeats's own home and a personal confession of the symbolic value of the landscape (stanzas two and three); yet, because it embraces the birth and death of one civilization and the birth of yet another, it has a more universal significance. Yeats's statement there is made not merely in terms of social history but also, again more privately and universally, in terms of his own craft: Homer's horse is now riderless, awaiting the poets of a new civilization, while nature keeps her mystery, as "the swan drifts upon a darkening flood" (CP, 276).

Here, in "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" the house itself seems to be receding into the past. Not introduced by name or visual description, it is evoked by a sound--"Sound of a stick upon the floor . . ." (CP, 276). This stick, mentioned in the opening line of stanza four, may be associated with the dry sticks by the lake described in stanza two whose wintry scene complements the apparent age of the figure moving about the house. Commenting that Jonson would have found these "extraordinarily private" lines "indecorous," Harris suggests that they function "rhetorically

to make Coole's public, 'established' greatness all the more resonant" (238). Indeed, the house is described in terms of objects which have been important to past inhabitants. Those objects point to a way of life which has included a love of art, books and travelling. The emphasis in the stanza, however, is on the physical presence of those objects and of "a last inheritor," rather than any life which may be continuing within the house:

> Sound of a stick upon the floor, a sound
> From somebody that toils from chair to chair;
> Beloved books that famous hands have bound,
> Old marble heads, old pictures everywhere;
> Great rooms where travelled men and children found
> Content or joy; a last inheritor
> Where none has reigned that lacked a name and fame
> Or out of folly into folly came.
>
> (CP, 276)

Similarly, stanza five consists of a catalogue of memorable occasions from a time then gone:

> A spot whereon the founders lived and died
> Seemed once more dear than life; ancestral trees,
> Or gardens rich in memory glorified
> Marriages, alliances and families,
> And every bride's ambition satisfied.
>
> (CP, 276)

But those founders and the social arrangements which once ensured the continuity of the family who dwelt within the house are no longer vital or required. In their time and place such arrangements fulfilled expectations. The word 'satisfied' expresses the sense of completion which accompanies these references to 'ife at Coole. The stanza ends with a seemingly quiet close which none the less brings Yeats's whole theory of history to bear upon his poem:

> Where fashion or mere fantasy decrees
> We shift about -- all that great glory spent --
> Like some poor Arab tribesman and his tent.
>
> (CP, 276)

Less disturbing than the announcement of a new dispensation in "The Second Coming," this image of "some poor Arab tribesman and his tent" heralds the beginning of a new age of civilization which forces Yeats's poetic aspirations and his time at Coole into the longer perspective which his theory of history provides.

Accordingly, in the final stanza, Yeats's vision of the demise of Coole and the accompanying loss of a source of poetic inspiration is rendered in epic terms which prove both a match for the perspective which he imposes. Because Yeats's poetic history was closely associated with the fate of Coole, his review of the scene is also a survey of his career as a poet. Although the concluding lines of the poem,

> . . . all is changed, that high horse riderless,
> Though mounted in that saddle Homer rode
> Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood
> (CP, 276),

look back to the mystery of "I walked among the Seven Woods of Coole," its early stanzas recall the middle years when nature seemed capable of providing emblems of man's meaning. In particular, they recall "The Wild Swans at Coole" where water and the swan had also provided emblems of man's soul. Similarly, the house itself which Yeats had regarded subjectively, endowing it with characteristics like passion and precision which he wished for himself, is intimately part of Yeats's personal history. Its destruction, quite understandably, affected Yeats deeply. Fittingly, its demise as the home of "traditional sanctity and loveliness" signalled the end of a poetic era--"We were the last romantics . . ." (CP, 276). Indeed, Yeats had so invested Coole with significance, and so prepared it to carry the burden of a whole tradition, that the hyperbole of Homer's fall seems a natural complement to its demise. Coole had come to stand

for everything, or as Daniel Harris concludes, "In this, Yeats's last poem about Lady Gregory's estate, Coole assumed its fullest proportions to become a symbol of all the world that mattered" (244).

Yeats's realization of those proportions in his poetry did not signal the end of either Coole's significance or his own career as a poet. By pushing towards the limits of Coole's significance he merely provided himself with a new perspective for even greater poetry. Although the house itself might be gone, or about to go, the conventions which had earlier allowed him to endow it with significance remained, 'enriched' by that destruction and the apparent exhaustion of meaning which accompanies any modern attempt to apply them to a contemporary situation. Those conventions, then, also served as the mechanisms which allowed him to pursue the full implications of the very attempt to bring meaning into the modern world, a task which occupied the rest of his career.

Having written the Coole Park poems and exhausted the modern application of the conventions of the country house genre, Yeats was free to place the destruction of Coole in a new context. In "Curse of Cromwell" (1936-37), for example, his reference to "a great house" automatically recalls Coole; yet because the house is not specifically identified, the significance of that reference extends to all such houses in Ireland:

> I came on a great house in the middle of the night,
> Its open lighted doorway and its windows all alight,
> And all my friends were there and made me welcome too.
> (CP, 351)

Because of previous associations which are almost instantly evoked by such a reference to "a great house," Yeats's ideals may be regarded more generally, and summed up as the accomplishments of civilized man. Those

accomplishments shine more brightly here in this poem because they have been juxtaposed with the elemental, almost sub-human, aftermath of twentieth-century violence which is apparent in the poem's conclusion:

> But I woke in an old ruin that the winds howled through;
> And when I pay attention I must out and walk
> Among the dogs and horses that understand my talk.
> O what of that, O what of that,
> What is there left to say?
> (CP, 351)

Cast in the form of a medieval ballad, "Curse of Cromwell" is one of a group of poems written in late 1936 and early 1937 in which Yeats expressed anger over contemporary Irish affairs. With the destruction of Coole, Yeats had in effect become a twentieth-century wanderer, having lost the place or organizing form within which his ideals of work and society had been fostered. Accordingly, he assumed the pose of a homeless balladeer who must carry all the meaning of his life with him. As he describes in a letter to Dorothy Wellesley, he speaks "though the mouth of some wandering peasant poet in Ireland" (Letter of 8 January 1937, LDW, 131). Later, he accounted for the sense of loss which is carried in the poem's refrain in another letter, explaining that the poem "is very poignant because it was my own state watching romance & nobility disappear" (Envelope dated 28 January 1937, LDW, 135). As "Curse of Cromwell" ends, past achievements and future challenges are laid aside. What emerges is a final bitterness and an acute sense that all that may be summed up in a vision of a great house and the company which gathered there has gone forever. Such a conclusion is, indeed, the inevitable fate of all who face the rising tide of modernity which began to swell, as Yeats's title suggests, at the end of the Renaissance, when Cromwell rose and fell.

Further, on at least two other occasions, references to a vision of a great house in ruins evoke the poignancy of life's transitoriness. In "Crazy Jane on God," Jane's reference to a brilliantly lit house is sufficient to describe her memory of the ecstasy of sexual climax:

> Before their eyes a house
> That from childhood stood
> Uninhabited, ruinous,
> Suddenly lit up
> From door to top.
> (CP, 294)

Similarly, in The King of the Great Clock Tower, the first attendant describes the vision which came to him in the intense moments when the head sang as a vision of a ruined house:

> O, but I saw a solemn sight;
> . . . . . .
> Castle Dargan's ruin all lit,
> Lovely ladies dancing in it.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> O what is life but a mouthful of air?
> . . . . . .
> Yet all the lovely things that were
> Live, for I saw them dancing there.
> (CPI, 640)

This dance epitomizes all the lovely things which that house had once fostered, much as the crowning achievements of the company at Coole had been summarized in "Coole Park, 1929" as "a dance-like glory that the walls begot" (CP, 274).

Possible sources for both these references as well as the lines from "Curse of Cromwell" are mentioned by Jeffares in his Commentary on Collected Poems (375). But as the connotations of the dancing ladies of The King of the Great Clock Tower illustrate, the sources suggested by Jeffares do not necessarily preclude an association between these visionary great houses and Coole which was perhaps the chief embodiment of romance and nobility in

Yeats's personal experience. In addition, these references preserve the basic assumption that the house is a form which can contain life and the values which make life meaningful. This assumption operates in Yeats's work until the end of his career and acquires new prominence in his very late play, Purgatory, which is pervaded by the presence of Coole and the significance it acquires through earlier associations with the country house genre.

The ideal of the country house stands behind Purgatory in the same way that the heroic ideal may be detected behind Death of Cuchulain. In Purgatory however, although the house as containing form, or embodiment of meaning, has already been physically destroyed, its meaning remains to haunt the old man who attempts to destroy its potency and bring its consequences to an end by re-living the deeds which brought about the destruction of the house and the way of life which it fostered. There are some, he says, who

> Re-live
> Their transgressions, and that not once
> But many times; they know at last
> The consequence of those transgressions
> Whether upon others or upon themselves;
> Upon others, others may bring help,
> For when the consequence is at an end
> The dream must end; if upon themselves,
> There is no help but in themselves
> And in the mercy of God.
>
> (CP1, 682)

Using Yeats's own terminology, the action of the play may be symbolized by a set of interpenetrating gyres representing the simultaneous weakening of the meaning embodied in the house and the growth of the elemental forces of life undisciplined by form. In terms of the lives of those close to the house, the effects of this process may be illustrated by noting that while the old man was begotten in the marriage-chamber of the great house,

his son was engendered in a ditch. He is, according to his father, "a bastard that a pedler got / Upon a tinker's daughter in a ditch" (684). This very same process provided Yeats with a basis of "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" where the speaker affirms that he is

> . . . content to live it all again
> And yet again, if it be life to pitch
> Into the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch,
> A blind man battering blind men;
> Or into that most fecund ditch of all,
> The folly that man does
> Or must suffer, if he woos
> A proud woman not kindred of his soul.
> (CP, 267)

The earlier poem clearly anticipates the later play where that process has added significance because it is specifically associated with the destruction of the meaning once embodied in the country house.

The conventions of the country house genre, as invoked in Yeats's earlier poems, survived there because their meaning lived on in the minds of men and women even after the physical destruction of the house. In Purgatory, such survival cannot be guaranteed. Providing more than a confrontation between civilization and elemental forces of life, Purgatory is an examination of man's ability to sustain the forms of civilization, given his dual nature which is capable of both good and evil, and instincts which cannot be made to coincide with aspirations which acquired form and meaning in the past. Because the house in Purgatory is representative of the great country houses of the past, its fate, and the fate of the meaning it embodies, is representative of the fate of the civilization which it fostered. The presence of the conventions of the country house genre allows the meaning once associated with that house, as well as its twentieth-century fate, to function within the play. At the same time,

the emptiness of those ... where the focus shifts to the tree, signal ... of the possibility that they can acquir ...

The house in Purgatory ... ver version of Coole. The fourth and fifth stanzas ... lee, 1931" are clearly recalled by the ... tory:

> Great people ... se:
> Magistrates, ... ament,
> Captains and ...
> Men that had ... Boyne.
> Some that had ... ark
> To London or ... ,
> Or came from ...
> To look at ...
> They had lov...
> . . . . . .
> Had loved ...
> The intricate ...
> But he killed ... house
> Where great ... ied,
> I here declare ...

(CP1, 683)

The difference between ... Park and Ballylee, 1931" lies in the perspective ... of the passage. In Purgatory the darkness of the pres... t at all presented as a challenging mystery. I... d as an individual crime against civilization.

Further, in the lin... love of the surrounding trees accompanies love of the ... other references to Coole, a nearby tree is capable of ... ning of the house and significance conferred by its associati... ntry house genre. Moreover, with the passing of time, that ... o have assumed in increasingly important role in Yeats's p... ation of the meaning of Coole.

His relatively early re... the leaves of his tree in "The Coming

of Wisdom with Time" (1910) (CP, 105) anticipates the tree of Purgatory with its "green leaves, ripe leaves, leaves thick as butter"(682). Mention of trees acquires added significance in "The New Faces" (1912) where he recalls the gathered company near "catalpa tree" and "scented lime" (CP, 238). Finally, his description of the house and tree in Purgatory is perhaps most clearly descended from his description of Coole in "Coole Park, 1929," where the real importance of the surrounding trees finally emerges. Compare from Purgatory,

> The moonlight falls upon the path,
> The shadow of a cloud upon the house,
> And that's symbolical; study that tree,
> What is it like?
>
> (CP1, 681),

and from "Coole Park, 1929,"

> I meditate upon a swallow's flight,
> Upon an aged woman and her house,
> A sycamore and lime-tree lost in night
> Although that western cloud is luminous.
>
> (CP, 273-74)

Again in Purgatory part of the meaning of the tree comes from an association with the meaning of the house. The seasonal change that physically alters the tree, complements the change that has altered the house. Yet, there is a significant difference: the tree is part of nature and will continue within nature's cycle. Hence, it will continue to survive long after the house has been destroyed. This difference, also recognized at the end of "Coole Park, 1929" where nature survives in the saplings growing amid the broken stone, has been grasped by the old man in Purgatory who recalls the tree in every season:

> I saw it a year ago stripped bare as now.
> . . . . . .
> I saw it fifty years ago
> Before the thunderbolt had riven it,
> Green leaves, ripe leaves, leaves thick as butter,
> Fat, greasy life.
>
> (CP1, 681-82)

The tree finally accomplishes what the house cannot. While the house has been physically destroyed and its symbolic value exploited to its limits, the tree is capable of rejuvenating itself. The tree can therefore symbolize all available meaning, including the birth and death of meaning. Man's meaning, that which he invested in the house, is all but lost and cannot be inherited. Poetic conventions or forms for meaning based upon that meaning are similarly handicapped. Such forms can survive their original physical embodiment, as Yeats's earlier poems demonstrate, but that survival is conditional upon the capabilities of man's memory and his determination to preserve their significance. In Purgatory man relinquishes the ability to make meaning. His memory fails and his will to sustain meaning is exhausted. Modern man is an insufficient preserver. The old man's words are definitive:

> I try to remember what the butler
> Said to a drunken gamekeeper
> In mid-October, but I cannot.
> If I cannot, none living can.
> (CP1, 681)

In the end, man preserves only his basic instincts. He evades responsibility and eschews form. Refusing to cultivate a form of life, he squabbles over money and reduces all value to the measure of money:

> I am a wretched foul old man
> And therefore harmless. When I have stuck
> This old jack-knife into a sod
> And pulled it out all bright again,
> And picked up all the money that he dropped,
> I'll to a distant place, and there
> Tell my old jokes among new men.
> (CP1, 688-89)

Essential philosophical problems remain unsolved in Purgatory. Those age-old problems,which first threatened when man first abdicated responsibility for their solution,began to destroy the old man's heritage when his mother married unworthily, heedless of responsibility:

> This night she is no better than her man
> And does not mind that he is half drunk,
> She is mad about him. They mount the stairs.
> She brings him into her own chamber.
> And that is the marriage-chamber now.
> (CP1, 685-86)

The problem which persists throughout Purgatory, and is central to much of Yeats's mature work, has to do with the duality of man whose natural instincts often cause him to choose a course which is at odds with his spiritual aspirations. Because the old man's mother did not heed the consequences of her deed, she is doomed to re-enact that deed in purgatory until relieved by the mercy of God while the physical consequences of her deed manifest themselves in the destruction of her house and the deterioration of the way of life which it fostered.

But the mother's deed is not entirely condemned. The choice which led to that deed cannot be ignored. Human nature must be weighed in the balance:

> But there's a problem: she must live
> Through everything in exact detail,
> Driven to it by remorse, and yet
> Can she renew the sexual act
> And find no pleasure in it, and if not,
> If pleasure and remorse must both be there
> Which is the greater?
> (CP1, 686)

Yeats has pondered this question elsewhere, including "A Dialogue of Self and Soul." It is a crucial question which also perplexed his Renaissance predecessors, including Donne and Milton.[27] But for them, it was asked within a different context. In a modern context, such a question has no answer. Social and religious solutions have lost their ability to influence man's conduct. Typically, the old man in Purgatory never does solve his dilemma or answer his question. The symbolic force of the play's title is sustained to the end. Even though the old man chooses to thwart

the future consequences of his mother's deed, he cannot free himself or past transgressors from their purgatory. He can only pray for release:

> O God,
> Release my mother's soul from its dream!
> Mankind can do no more. Appease
> The misery of the living and the remorse of the dead.
> (CP1, 689)

All of the old man's actions are destructive. Murder and other crimes are the only deeds he can perform. The only salvation he can guarantee comes from the destruction of generation:

> I finished all that consequence.
> I killed that lad because had he grown up
> He would have struck a woman's fancy,
> Begot, and passed pollution on.
> I am a wretched foul old man
> And therefore harmless.
> (CP1, 688)

Having lost its strength, man's meaning has been subsumed within the mystery of nature which alone is pure:

> Study that tree.
> It stands there like a purified soul,
> All cold, sweet, glistening light.
> (CP1, 688)

Alone with his misery, the old man of Purgatory is representative of all modern men. He dwells on the edge of a dying civilization in which forms and conventions, once vital, have lost the ability to transmit meaning. Unable to herald new meaning, they serve modern man only to the extent that their impotence illustrates the destruction of meaning. What happens to the conventions of the country house genre as Yeats uses them to bring about the revelation of that truth is typical of what will happen to all of the forms and conventions used in the past. Yeats's growing knowledge of that truth, that in time the forces of modernism would break

the things that men had wrought, directed his life-long interest in tradition and, in particular, his adaptation of the achievements of Jonson and other Renaissance predecessors. Ultimately, it brought him to the recognition that all men would finally be left on their own where "all the ladders start / In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart" (CP, 392).

PART B: Yeats and Donne

. . . at last I can understand Donne. Your notes tell me exactly what I want to know. . . . I notice that the more precise and learned the thought the greater the beauty, the passion; the intricacy and subtleties of his imagination are the length and the depths of the furrow made by his passion. His pedantry and his obscenity . . . the rock and the loam of his Eden . . . but make me the more certain that one who is but a man like us all has seen God.

Letter to Grierson, 12 November [1912]

There is not a fool can call me friend,
And I may dine at journey's end
With Landor and with Donne.

"To a Young Beauty," 1918

I have been reading your Donne again . . . especially that intoxicating 'St Lucies Day' which I consider always an expression of passion. . . . I have used the arrangements of the rhymes of the stanzas for a poem of my own, just finished.

Letter to Grierson, 21 February [1926]

CHAPTER I

Introductory

1. Survey of Criticism

John Donne is not only a major Renaissance poet, but one whose relevance to modern poetry has long been established, especially with respect to T. S. Eliot and his critics. In the circumstances, surprisingly little attention has been paid to connections between Donne and Yeats, the most significant of all modern poets--T. S. Eliot notwithstanding. There is thus still a need for a comprehensive exploration of the relationship between Yeats and Donne. To date, with one or two exceptions, all attempts to consider the two poets together have been fragmentary, even fleeting.

Yeats specialists have, however, begun to locate specific points of contact between the two poets. Several make passing reference to Yeats's remarks about 'the rock and loam' of Donne's Eden in his 1912 letter to Grierson (L, 570), including Thomas Henn, Bhabatosh Chatterjee, John Unterecker, Edward Engelberg, Daniel Harris and William Carpenter.[1] Similarly, Yeats's mention of Landor and Donne in the final line of "To a Young Beauty" (1918) is acknowledged by Hone, Henn, Rajan and Stallworthy.[2]

Others direct attention to Donne's influence in "The Cold Heaven," notably Hone (302) and Henn (LT, 93). Meanwhile, although evidence for Donne's influence in "The Chosen" was provided by Yeats himself, in his letter to Grierson of 21 February 1926 (L, 709-11), the exact nature of

that influence has been clarified more recently by F. A. C. Wilson (W. B. Yeats and the Tradition (London: Gollancz, 1958), 205-10) and Georgio Melchiori (The Whole Mystery of Art (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), 180-83). Both poems are also considered below.

Still others remark, usually in passing, on various aspects of Yeats's similarity to Donne. For example, parallel attitudes to death are detected in the work of the two poets by Henn (LT, 40), Desai (Yeats's Shakespeare, 119) and Chatterjee (71). Syntactical similarities are noted by Vivienne Koch, Donald Davie and Thomas Henn, with Henn arguing that the rhetorical tradition of the English Renaissance stands behind Yeats's development as a poet.[3] Finally, similarities to Donne with respect to the use of metaphor, apparent in Yeats's later poetry and more explicitly described in "The Tragic Generation," demonstrate the ultimate identity of metaphysical and symbolist poetry for Cleanth Brooks (Modern Poetry and the Tradition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 11, 61-64).

In addition, isolated examples of Yeats's debts to Donne in particular poems are cited by several, but most notably by Henn, in his several studies, and by Joseph Duncan in Chapter VII of his survey of the modern importance of the metaphysicals, The Revival of Metaphysical Poetry (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959). Because of the extensive documentation which characterizes their work, it stands out from that of their colleagues; yet because of substantial omissions, largely intentional, neither has produced a major assessment of the relationship between Yeats and Donne.

While Henn points to a great many similarities in the work of the

two poets, and while he recognizes the importance of Yeats's 1912 letter to Grierson, he does not attempt to gather his observations into a single account of Yeats's debt to Donne. More seriously, he fails to assess Donne's importance to Yeats in the crucially formative years before 1912. He does, however, consistently remark upon Yeats's interest in the Renaissance, and is among the few who recommend a general knowledge of the period to potential students of Yeats (LT, xii).

An important chapter of Duncan's book, Chapter VI: "The Metaphysical Revival, 1872-1912," first appeared in essentially the same form in PMLA in 1953, as "The Revival of Metaphysical Poetry." Complemented by Kathleen Tillotson's subsequent study of Donne's reputation from 1800-1872, Duncan's work is invaluable as a survey of attitudes to Donne and the other metaphysicals in the pre-modern period.[4] His Chapter VII still serves as the best summary of points of contact between Yeats and Donne. Although brief, that summary has special merit because it places Yeats's contact with Donne in a critical context which also includes the development of Donne's influence through the late nineteenth century and the culmination of that influence in the poetry and criticism of T. S. Eliot. Duncan correctly points to the nature of the exchange between the two poets with his observation that Yeats both responded to the influence of the seventeenth-century metaphysicals and wrote his own twentieth-century metaphysical poetry (130), and he rightly concludes that Yeats's "life-long interest in correspondences and 'unity of being' complemented his concern with Donne" (142). In spite of the inclusiveness of his study, however, Duncan merely provides an introduction to the relationship between the two poets which points to the need for a longer and more detailed

assessment of that relationship and its influence on modern poetry.

Frank Kermode also focuses on the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries in Romantic Image (1957) which appeared while Duncan's study was in preparation. Although Kermode's main concern is the poetic image, his study must be considered here because of his belief in the continuing importance of Donne to modern aesthetics and because of his choice of Yeats as the twentieth-century poet who most fully understood the Romantic tradition which was 'haunted' by Donne's lines on Elizabeth Drury and which Yeats transmitted to the twentieth century by incorporating his concept of the 'thinking of the body' into his search for 'unity of being' (53-54). By linking Yeats's role in the evolution of modernity to his nineteenth-century predecessors and contemporaries, through their respective apprehensions of the Renaissance, Kermode points to the central relevance of Renaissance poetics to modern poetry, and shows how interpretations of the Renaissance can function to reveal the needs and responses which, in the end, most clearly define the modern (111-13). Thus, Kermode's study complements Duncan's and is an important extension of Duncan's early investigation of the Donne Revival. Further, with respect to the attempt to assess the literary relationship between Yeats and Donne, Kermode's work is a valuable corrective to studies such as Henn's which imply that Donne's importance to Yeats began with Yeats's reading of the Grierson edition in 1912.

Kermode's book does not purport to be a comprehensive study of the relationship between Donne and Yeats. While he does examine certain aspects of Yeats's knowledge of Donne before 1912, he does not include a detailed account of later contacts. He does not, for example, provide

any evidence that would counter Harold Bloom's later assertion that there is "little Donne in Yeats" because "even after [Yeats's] delight in the Grierson edition, his Donne remained the Donne of the romantic tradition" (Yeats, 168). None the less, Kermode's study must be taken into account in any attempt to assess Donne's importance to Yeats. His study is significant not only because he considers Yeats's connection to his nineteenth-century heritage, but also because, in pointing out that connection, he points to Yeats's differences from his contemporaries which reveal that Yeats was capable of an independent assessment of Donne that looked beyond the already established Romantic tradition.

More specifically, Kermode detects those differences with respect to Yeats's consciousness of the need to communicate. Very early in his study, he noted that Yeats "accepted isolation, but also accepted the duty to communicate" (RI, 67). Or, as he later asserts, Yeats combined the two:

> he had a matured poet's concern for the relation of symbol to discourse. He understood that one pole of symbolist theory is sacramentalism . . . and was willing to see in the discourse . . . of the dedicated, symbolic values. (160)

Further, any comprehensive study of Yeats's use of Donne must fully take into account Kermode's concluding observation that even

> the slaves of time, the non-poets, will find a validity in [Yeats's] symbolic poems that is, for them, absent from the pure poetry of the dream. They share with the poet not only the Great Memory, but also the ordinary syntax of the daily life of action. . . . This is not the dissociation of the image that is complained of; it is an admission that art was always made for men who habitually move in space and time, whose language is propelled onward by verbs, who cannot always be asked to respect the new enclosure laws of poetry, or such forbidding notices as 'No road through to action.' (161)

In other words, Yeats's characteristic emphasis upon normal man, and man speaking to man, which made Ben Jonson an important member of his tradition, also conditioned his response to Donne, distinguishing Yeats from his contemporaries, and providing an important reason--if not the reason--why Yeats was able to express the modern condition in poetry as no one else could.

Thus, Yeats's early exposure to Donne must be more carefully regarded in the light of his reticence to surrender himself completely to the non-human, and even anti-human, components in the Romantic aesthetic. Similarly, Yeats's inheritance from nineteenth-century Romanticism must be brought to bear upon observations of his technical development after 1912. This means, of course, that Yeats's accomplishments in the years between 1900 and Responsibilities, which include his Discoveries, must be related both to his activities in the nineties and to his later poetry and thought. Few have attempted such a survey.

William Carpenter does, however, point to a general trend "towards the body" in Yeats's work after Discoveries, a series of essays which he regards as an announcement that henceforth Yeats would "regard thought only in conjunction with its bodily expression, as he envisioned the guitar player" (MP, 52). Further, Carpenter notes that the essay from Discoveries whose title, "Thinking of the Body," is an adaptation of Donne's phrase,

> contains a summary of what has been 'discovered,' the new poetic program, and also a final link between the idea of a 'personal' art and the idea of the Renaissance, the one period in history where one could actually see the realization of 'personality' and 'unity of being' on a grand scale. (MP, 53)

Carpenter himself deals with a selection of poems from The Green Helmet and makes reference to certain later poems, but a full-scale examination of the 'link' which he points out is beyond the scope of this article. Indeed, he suggests that it remains "a separate task to catalog the number of times Yeats alludes to the Renaissance as a symbol of . . . [his] cultural and personal idea" (MP, 59). Further, he suggests that the metaphysical style first used in "A Friend's Illness" later became a "permanent element" of Yeats's style. And although he concludes that the traits which Yeats borrowed from the Renaissance are "generally submerged in the individuality of Yeats's mature style," perhaps underestimating their contribution to that style, he at least directs attention to Yeats's later work where all claims for significant influence, of Donne as of others, must be vindicated.

Failure to explore the full significance of Yeats's contacts with Donne characterizes most references to Donne in recent critical studies of Yeats. For example, a passing remark in Daniel Harris's Yeats: Coole Park and Ballylee (1974) illustrates how Yeats's adaptation of Donne's phrase may be related to other influences and to the general development of Yeats's thought. Harris suggests that the phrase "thinking of the body" provided Yeats with another means of describing the kind of bodily beauty which he said Castiglione had termed "the spoil or monument of the victory of the soul":

> Borrowing from Donne's Second Anniversary (l. 246), Yeats called that state "the thinking of the body" and later "unity of being"; finally it became the "profane perfection of mankind," for it owed nothing to divine intervention and everything to earthly struggle. (37)

But having suggested that Donne's phrase helped Yeats to articulate his ideal of the 'completed self' (Harris's phrase, 36) at a relatively early point in a long career devoted to the exploration of that ideal, Harris immediately moves on to consider Yeats's reading of Castiglione and other matters without pursuing the implications of Yeats's use of the phrase from the particular perspective of Donne's influence upon Yeats.

Those implications are, however, examined by B. Rajan who focuses directly upon Donne's phrase in his analysis of Yeats's development in a recent article, "Yeats and the Renaissance." Having established the importance of the Renaissance to Yeats, Rajan immediately turns to Donne for an explanation of that importance:

> When [we] ask how the Renaissance was instrumental in bringing about Yeats's finding of himself, we become aware that Donne's description of Elizabeth Drury was an early and potent influence in Yeats's mind. Apart from giving a title to an essay in Discoveries (where Urbino is mentioned, possibly for the first time), it directs the movement out of the twilight and away from the dream-burdened will. (110-11)

Rajan's remarks imply that Yeats's use of Donne's phrase does not emphasize his connection to the poets of the nineties or his own literary past, but rather, crucially directs his emancipation into the future. He does not conclude that the differences between Yeats and his contemporaries prevented Yeats from completely embracing Donne's phrase, as, for example, Kermode seems to imply. Instead, he suggests that they made it possible for Yeats to adopt Donne's phrase so fully that he made it serve his own particular meaning. Moreover, as Rajan points out, Yeats continued to explore that meaning, as articulated with the help of Donne's phrase, throughout his career. In A Vision, for example, Yeats looked to the reconciliation of Paganism and Christianity which, in Rajan's words,

"involves the rediscovery of the human body as God's first handiwork and the norm of order" and inspires "an art of physicality that is insistently more than physical, an art in which natural and supernatural are brought together in the thinking of the body" (117). These remarks point to the manner in which Yeats made Donne's phrase his own and help to reveal the larger purpose behind Yeats's appeal to Donne as a master of poetic technique.

On the whole Donne specialists are just as, if not more, conscious of comparisons between Yeats and Donne. However, because their intent has most often been the clarification of Donne's twentieth-century reputation, rather than Yeats's specific use of Donne, Yeats is most often mentioned in passing. No one has yet attempted a comprehensive study of Donne's specific contribution to Yeats's achievement.

Most frequently, mention is made of Yeats's 1912 letter to Grierson. Those who note its importance include Edward Le Comte, Julian Lovelock, Una Nelly and A. J. Smith.[5] Commentators also point to Yeats's interest in Donne's Anniversary Poems as well as to parallels between the two poets and their mutual search for unity. Edward Le Comte, for example, suggests that Yeats read Donne carefully and notes a similarity between Donne's An Anatomy of the World, "new Philosophy calls all in doubt" and "'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone," and Yeats's "Second Coming," ". . . / Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold / . . ." (241). Frank Kermode traces the evolution of Donne's phrase, "her body thought," from The Second Anniversary through the development of the modern theory of the image to Eliot's doctrine of 'dissociation of sensibility' in an article, entitled "Dissociation of Sensibility,"which appeared in 1957. Much

of the same information is included in Romantic Image, also published in 1957.[6] Commenting, in a 1959 article, on the timing of Eliot's presentation of his doctrine, Louis Martz notes that it came in 1921, just as Yeats was "deep within the composition of his private guide to 'Unity of Being,' A Vision, which appeared in 1925." As one of the few commentators to point to a specific comparison between the thought of Yeats and Donne, Martz explains the link between them:

> in composing the Vision, Yeats tells us, he learned from his mysterious teachers that he must, in effect, feel his thought, or, in his own words, 'give concrete expression to their abstract thought.' '. . . and if my mind returned too soon to their unmixed abstraction they [his "communicators"] would say, "We are starved."' [Cf. AV(B), 12][7]

Martz further suggests that Donne seemed to answer "a general quest for unity of being" in as much as he "presents the very process by which unity of mind is discovered" (143, 144). That is, "the unity enacted within his poetry was not a gift: it was a unity achieved in much the same way that Eliot and Yeats and Hopkins and Paul Claudel were later to follow--the way of arduous and disciplined meditation" (145). That way is described in more detail in Martz's longer study, The Poetry of Meditation (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1962) which includes specific references to parallels between Yeats and Donne, while here in this essay, Martz suggests that Donne's career, like that of those moderns, "represents a record of the farming of the self, the stocking of the self, the gathering of the beams of the self into one intense and burning focus" (147).

Martz's emphasis on the difficulty of those labours towards unity is repeated in the observation of Gale H. Carrithers, Jr (Donne at Sermons (Albany, New York: State University of New York)) that

Donne's exposition in the "Sermon of Valediction" "may have closed where its terms began, like a circle, but in another sense has carried the argument and 'the understanders' somewhat like Yeats's famous ascending spiral stair" (143). That is, Carrithers uses Yeats's image to point to similarities in the creative progress of each poet which, in respect to Donne, mean that, in spite of pitfalls along the way, each full circle in his creative journey brings him closer to the New Jerusalem which he sought.

Further, Martz's description of the careers of both Donne and Yeats as records "of the farming of the self" (147) points to the element of self-dramatization which their poetry shares. Although he does not elaborate on this connection in the short essay mentioned above, in his earlier Poetry of Meditation he cites, with approval, Yeats's description in terms of the theatre, of the correspondence between the poet's creative imagination and his discipline which Martz associates with the discipline of meditation:

> 'If we cannot imagine ourselves as different from what we are, and try to assume that second self, we cannot impose a discipline upon ourselves though we may accept one from others. Active virtue, as distinguished from the passive acceptance of a code, is therefore theatrical, consciously dramatic, the wearing of a mask. . . .' (cited by Martz, 321; cf. "Anima Hominis," M, 334)

No one, however, attempts a detailed exploration of the tendency towards dramatization which is apparent in their poetry, although some remark that that tendency in Yeats contributed significantly to the modern appreciation of Donne. For example, J. B. Leishman (The Monarch of Wit (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1959)) suggests that Yeats turned to dramatic poetry in reaction to what he calls "the modern cult of sincerity":

> To-day, for those . . . who are always looking and asking for what they call 'sincerity' in literature, the presence of any considerable element of self-dramatization in a writer is offensive and, perhaps, only half intelligible. And yet it was precisely the lack of what he called 'dramatic lyrical expression' in English poetry that was deplored by the greatest English poet of this century, W. B. Yeats, who declared that Villon and Ronsard had made magnificent drama out of their own lives, and who strove, not unsuccessfully, to do the same himself, rather despising the modern cult of sincerity and opposing to it his doctrine of the mask. The dramatic element in Donne's life and in Donne's poetry is most important, and we must have a taste for drama in order to understand and appreciate it. (47-48)

Meanwhile, Le Comte has declared that sincerity is no longer an obstacle to the appreciation of Donne's poetry since, in his words, "Yeats's doctrine of 'the mask' has succeeded" (234).

Clay Hunt (Donne's Poetry: Essays in Literary Analysis (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1954)) observes that Yeats's theory of the mask made him an especially shrewd observer of Donne's personality. Having already noted that Yeats was responding to Donne's "hard intellectual pride, [his] individualistic sense of personal separateness from the concerns of 'every Jack and Jill' . . . when he wrote:

> There's not a fool can call me friend
> And I may dine at Journey's end
> With Landor and with Donne,

Hunt further deduces that Yeats discerned deeper parallels between his own personality and Donne's as well as Landor's, which governed his choice of dinner companions in "To a Young Beauty":

> Yeats saw . . . that the strong and definite public personality which we find in Donne's poems was only Donne's Mask, and that the private personality behind the mask was in many ways antithetic to that dramatic construct of the literary imagination. The rest of Yeats's poem . . . suggests that he was thinking particularly of the contrast between the ascetic intellectuality of Donne's literary personality and the intense

> sexuality of his private life; but the parallel with Landor makes Yeats's point fully clear, because Yeats regarded Landor as a man who compensated, in the cool, lapidary hardness of his literary persona, for the headlong passions, the strong sexuality, and the general emotional turbulence of his personal life. Yeats saw this same compensatory pyschological process at work behind his own poetry, and his comments on the contrast between his own poetic persona and his private personality will stand--by inference from "To a Young Beauty"--as one of the most penetrating insights into Donne's personality. (Hunt 165; 177-78)

To illustrate his point, Hunt quotes from two of Yeats's descriptions of himself from Autobiographies. First, he cites a comment from the conclusion of "Hodos Chameliontos":

> As I look backward upon my own writing I take pleasure alone in those verses where it seems to me I have found something hard and cold, some articulation of the Image, which is the opposite of all that I am in my daily life, and all my country is. . . .

Then, he notes the passage from "Four Years: 1887-1891" which includes Yeats's surmise that he loved "proud and lonely things" because nature had made him "a gregarious man. . . ." Accepting these analyses as descriptions of Donne's personality as well, Hunt concludes that "Donne wrote poems in which feeling is disposed coolly into orderly patterns by the firm grasp of thought, and which often attain to Yeats's aesthetic ideal of poetry 'as cold and passionate as the dawn'" (177-78. Cf. A, 274 and 171). Thus, for Hunt a comparison between the two poets is valuable for what it reveals about Donne himself, rather than his contribution to Yeats's development. Whether others would agree with Hunt's ensuing assessment of Donne is perhaps open to question. Indeed, given Yeats's ability to re-make others according to an image of his own choosing, perhaps the most that ought to be said for Yeats's descriptions is that they reveal Donne as Yeats may have seen him, not necessarily as he really was.

In addition, other Donne specialists have found it convenient to turn to Yeats for their descriptions of Donne. Attempting to account for the fact that Donne's best and most original work appeared in "the years of his great unrest, between 1593 and 1601," Una Nelly explains that "it seems as if struggle and doubt were the necessary concomitants of his inspiration, and bear out the remark of Yeats: 'We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry . . . we sing amid our uncertainty.'" (The Poet Donne, 14. Cf. M , 331). Meanwhile, Donipan Louthan (The Poetry of John Donne: A Study in Explication (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951)) had already adapted the phrase to describe Donne's poetry: "out of the quarrel with himself (if so we may call his trying on of moods and personalities), Donne made poetry which is rhetoric and logic--a dialectic which is none the less poetry" (26).

Indeed, those who have specifically focused upon technical matters have perhaps come closer to the nature of the examination which must be conducted in order to reveal more fully the parallel between the two poets' tendencies to self-dramatization. To that end, Nelly, observing that the debate in "The Blossome" is more successful than in Yeats's "over-dramatized" "Dialogue of Self and Soul" (10), suggests that Donne's influence was behind Yeats's change of style after 1900:

> Yeats shows Donne's influence when in his Autobiographies he explains how he tried to write out his emotions, 'exactly as they came to me in life,' and to that end employed colloquial and dramatic elements in order that 'the hearer would tell the presence of a man thinking and feeling.' (67)

In addition, Yeats's use of colloquial elements and his possible turning to Donne as a model in response to his concern with the problem of language

in modern poetry, is particularly emphasized by Arnold Stein (John Donne's Lyrics: The Eloquence of Action (Minneapolis: University of Minnestota Press, 1962)) who observes in his concluding Postscript that one of the most relevant aspects of Donne's achievement from the viewpoint of twentieth-century poets was his "ability to talk in verse, to use a syntax, diction, and rhythm which seemed easily, naturally colloquial and yet which created an authentic language of poetry" (204).

But, in addition to Donne's colloquialism, more 'poetic' aspects of his style have been analyzed in relation to Yeats's principles and practices. Here again, Yeats's accomplishment appears to have helped Donne specialists to see Donne's work more clearly. Clay Hunt, for example, comments that when he watches Donne "Scrutinizing his words . . . to find out exactly what they should mean," he thinks of Yeats's remark about "our common English . . . that needs such a sifting that he who would write it vigorously must write it like a learned language" (164. Cf. A, 219). In addition, Stein points to what he terms "the brilliant lyricism" of the last stanza of "A Valediction: Of Weeping" (59). He suggests that it is a rare example in Donne of "the structure of sound doing more than echoing the sense" since, indeed, "it may be essential for completing the sense" (61). Stein's example of a poet who more frequently uses "a reckless excess in the structure of sound" is Yeats, and to illustrate his point, he cites the concluding lines of "The Magi"--"The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor"--and of "Byzantium"--"That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea"--where he suggests that the structure of sound is "The chief agent for the emotional release (and the tension maintained within the poetic resolution) that is central to the meaning of each poem"

(61).

Similarly, in a later study Judah Stampfer (John Donne and the Metaphysical Gesture (N.Y.: Funk and Wagnalls, 1970)) suggests that the opening couplet of "Love's Deitie" is "relaxed, mellow, witty, and poised, its dreamy music reminiscent of Yeats" (105). Moreover, at the outset of his study, in an attempt to clarify the nature of Donne's achievement, Stampfer points to a contrast between Donne and Yeats. Observing that there is always "some essential plot" to a metaphysical poem, he suggests that in contrast to Eliot's or Yeats's, Donne's catharsis "characteristically remains deeply private." It "lies in reducing the arbitrary, immediate to personal indifference or mastery" (ix). Further on, Stampfer notes that "Yeats articulated a collective consciousness more than a personal and private one. We tremble for western Europe, for Leda and the swan, not for Yeats or any human girl friend" (74). Here too, Yeats's example is invoked to describe Donne's achievement.

Finally, in his Postscript, "On Donne's Modern Career," Stein, in essence, offers directions for future studies of the relationships between Donne and Eliot and Donne and Yeats which, with respect to the latter at least, have yet to be followed. Citing the studies by Duncan and Tillotson which document nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critical response to Donne, Stein continues to argue for the importance of the modern response:

> yet, granted that there is an older history behind the modern sense of Donne's newness, that modern sense does create its own history, for which there is no precedent. The decisive difference is this: in the twentieth century Donne was not a minor influence in a critical crosscurrent but entered a mainstream. Critical response became an active partner of creative response, a partner of the best of the new poetry being written. For instance, Yeats and Eliot make critical comments on Donne and, besides, refer to him in their poetry. The references are complimentary;

> but more than that, they exhibit and create admiration and understanding; most important of all, they imply that there is an angle at which modern imaginative creation coincides with the poetry of Donne. (199)

Stein's immediate point is that the attention of Eliot and Yeats, coming as it did when their own prestige was growing so that "their accomplishments point the way to further accomplishments, both by themselves and others" (199) brought about an increase in Donne's prestige which had great potential value. But Stein's remarks, which emphasize the dynamic effect of Donne's prestige, may also be used to focus upon the dynamic process of influence, upon the activity of the creative response of modern poets and, for the purposes of this study, of Yeats in particular. For indeed, from the early years of this century through to the end of his career, Yeats's response to Donne was continually modified by his own creative needs so that it is necessary to explore that process, not merely to gauge the extent of Donne's prestige, but also, to determine the nature of Yeats's accomplishment.

2. Evidence of Encounters

Before exploring the nature of Donne's influence on Yeats, evidence of Yeats's encounters with Donne must be assembled. First, it must be noted that Yeats himself provided direct evidence of his knowledge of Donne on at least six occasions throughout his career, from 1912 to 1937.[8] Second, indirect evidence of that knowledge must also be considered since it illustrates, in a significant way, that Yeats's direct references do not fully represent the value of his encounter with Donne or any other figure of potential influence. For example, Yeats's early interest in Donne is apparent in Discoveries (1906-07) where he adapted Donne's description of Elizabeth Drury to give shape to his thought and provide a title for one of his most important essays. The fact that Yeats allowed this adaptation, particularly his evolution of the phrase "thinking of the body," to pass without acknowledgement suggests that with the peaking of the Donne Revival in the early 1900's the possibility of Donne's influence might be taken for granted. In addition, it silently confirms that Donne was a factor in Yeats's development long before the Grierson edition of 1912.

A recent survey of Yeats's library has revealed that Yeats possessed at least two editions of Donne's poetry: Grierson's two-volume set of 1912, and John Hayward's edition of the Complete Poetry and Selected Prose compiled for the Nonesuch Press in 1929.[9] The latter appears to have been a gift from Yeats's wife in 1930 and confirms Yeats's sustained interest in Donne. The Grierson edition, however, has considerably more significance.

Most obviously, its very presence validates Yeats's remarks in his 1912 letter to Grierson, while an examination of Yeats's much-used copy provides some indication of the particular parts of Donne's work which were of special interest to Yeats. For example, although many pages of his copy of Volume I remain uncut, Yeats appears to have cut and read "Songs and Sonets," "Elegies," "Satyres," and "The Progresse of the Soule." More important perhaps, in Volume II he seems to have studied Grierson's Introduction, commentaries on the poetry read in Volume I, and the commentary on "Letters to Several Personages," even though the pages containing the letters themselves are uncut. Yeats may, in fact, have read those "Letters" much earlier in another edition. Certainly his interest in Grierson's remarks about them is not surprising in view of the nature of his interest in Ben Jonson in the early 1900's and his 1906 request to Bullen for information regarding the ladies who had participated in court presentations of Jonson's masques (L, 478-79).

In general, however, these selections indicate that Yeats read, or re-read, portions of Donne as he examined Grierson's Introduction. Relatively early in that Introduction Grierson gives general consideration to Donne's "Satyres," "Elegies" and "Songs and Sonets" (II, x), then continues to discuss Donne's "Letters" and "The Progress of the Soule" (II, xiv). In his discussions, Grierson compares Donne and Jonson, especially with respect to their letters. In fact, he judges that Donne excelled all of his Elizabethan rivals, but especially Daniel and Jonson,

> in the clear and pointed yet easy and conversational development of his thought, in the play of wit and wisdom, and, despite the pedantic cast of Elizabethan erudite moralizing, in the power to leave on the reader the impression of a potent and yet a winning personality. (II, xiv)

Similarly, Grierson discerns a "personal interest" in the certain "Satyres" and in "The Progresse of the Soule" where he finds "vivid picture[s] of the inner workings of Donne's soul at a critical period in his life" (II, xv). Such observations were no doubt of particular interest to Yeats who was attempting to bring the "spoken word" back to literature (E&I, 266) and who had turned to the Renaissance, and Jonson and Donne in particular, for guidance in that attempt. Thus, in this matter, as in others, Grierson's interests complemented Yeats's as he addressed concerns which had preoccupied Yeats since the turn of the century.

But even before the turn of the century Yeats had formed friendships with Arthur Symons and Lionel Johnson, both prominent figures in the so-called 'Donne Revival.' Like Yeats, both belonged to the Rhymers' Club where their critical activities extended into the composition of their own poetry. In a late broadcast Yeats recalled that the Rhymers had "tried to write like . . . Jacobean lyricists, men who wrote while poetry was still pure" (E&I, 495), a remark which points to the admiration--and idealization--of the seventeenth-century English poets which Yeats shared with his contemporaries. Grierson himself was another of those contemporaries, an acquaintance whose interest in Donne may be traced to the nineties and his reading of Dowden, Minto and Chambers. Yeats first met Grierson in 1906, the year of his own Discoveries and of Grierson's The First Half of the Seventeenth Century. The latter includes a treatment of Donne that was a forerunner to other publications, including his article on Donne for The Cambridge History of English Literature, and his two-volume edition of Donne's poetry.[10] Grierson, with whom Yeats corresponded throughout his career, recalls that "Donne had always been a source of interest to Yeats,"

a remark which implies that Yeats's long-standing familiarity with Donne pre-dated both his meeting with Grierson and the appearance of the 1912 edition.

CHAPTER II

Aspects of Influence

1. Specific Knowledge: Direct References to Donne

Mention of Grierson, among Yeats's contemporaries, leads very naturally to a more detailed consideration of Yeats's direct references to Donne since, in one way or another, Grierson is associated with five of those six references. In general, Grierson's edition was important to Yeats because it appeared in 1912 when Yeats was in the midst of altering both his style and his subject matter and therefore, in the midst of re-evaluating earlier influences. Superficially, Grierson's remarks in his Introduction and notes offered Yeats an opportunity to see principles similar to his own applied to a study of Donne by a modern scholar in the process of examining a Renaissance figure from a particularly modern perspective. More fundamentally, these remarks re-directed Yeats's attention to the manner in which the energy of life had been captured in poems which seemed to offer solutions to many of his own artistic problems and in fact, it is in his adaptation of Donne's solutions that Yeats's distinctiveness as a modern is most clearly revealed.

Even though Yeats's re-reading of Donne in the Grierson edition of 1912 undoubtedly increased his consciousness of the techniques of metaphysical poetry and their potential contribution to his own work, as Henn and others suggest, that re-reading does not break the essential continuity of his development. In a preface of 1906, for example, he observed that

"all art . . . is an endeavour to condense . . . an image of human perfection" (VE, 849). In Discoveries of 1906-07 he adapted Donne's phrase, "her body thought," especially in the essay entitled "The Thinking of the Body" (E&I, 292-93). In 1913, after his encounter with the Grierson edition, he informed his father that he had tried to make his work "convincing with a speech so natural and dramatic that the hearer would feel the presence of a man thinking and feeling" (L, 583), a remark which confirms the intent of his earlier adaptation of Donne's phrase and points to his continuing desire to express Unity of Being in his poetry.

But while the appearance of Grierson's edition did not substantially alter Yeats's views on Donne, it did help to clarify them, and it was the publication of that edition which prompted Yeats's first direct reference to Donne in the letter of acknowledgement to Professor Grierson which is dated 14 November 1912:

> I write to thank you for your edition of Donne. It was very generous of you to send it to me. I have been using it constantly and find that at last I can understand Donne. Your notes tell me exactly what I want to know. Poems that I could not understand or could but understand are now clear. . . . (L, 570)

Notes which almost certainly must have been of interest to Yeats, because of their relevance to matters which were already of special concern to him, include those to "Twicknam Garden" (II, 26-27), to "A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day" (II, 38), and to "The Extasie" (II, 41-45), as well as the introductory notes to "Songs and Sonets" (II, 8-10) and the Introduction to the edition as a whole (II, v-lv). Yet with one exception to be considered presently, it is unlikely that Grierson's remarks really did

more than confirm what Yeats already knew.

What appears certain is that the language of Grierson's remarks reappears in Yeats's references to Donne. His letter continues:

> . . . I notice that the more precise and learned the thought the greater the beauty, the passion; the intricacy and subtleties of his imagination are the length and the depths of the furrow made by his passion. His pedantry and his obscenity--the rock and the loam of his Eden--but make me the more certain that one who is but a man like us all has seen God. (L, 570)

Meanwhile, Grierson had remarked that Donne's wit was "the instrument of a mind which is not only subtle and ingenious but profoundly poetical" (II, ix). He had described Donne's "too subtle ingenuity or misplaced erudition" (II, xx), "fanciful and subtle compliment" (II, xx), "dazzling and subtle vein" (II, xxi). He had called "Twickham Garden" a "subtle, passionate, sonorous lyric" and said that it had been "given an amazing timbre by the impulse of Donne's subtle and passionate mind" (II, xxii). He had written that "poetry is the language of passion . . ." (II, xxiii) and commented upon Donne's "passionate heart and satiric wit" (II, xxv). He observed the "combination of dialectical subtlety with weight and force of passion" in Donne's poetry (II, xxxi), and noted that in "A Nocturnall," "passion finds expression in abstract and subtle thought" (II, xxxiv). Again, he described Donne's "restless and subtle mind" (II, xxxv). He observed that "The Sunne Rising" was "devoted to the subtle and extravagant . . . but not the less passionate development of the thought that for him the woman he loves is the whole world" (II, xxxix). He discerned a "sensual passion" in Donne's love-poems (II, xl) and remarked upon "the vivid and packed force with which they portray a variously mooded passion working through a swift and subtle brain," a passion which he later said, "rises superior to sensuality and wit, and

takes wing into a more spiritual and ideal atmosphere" (II, xlii). He described the "simplicity of feeling combined with a like swift and subtle dialectic" which may be detected in Donne's songs (II, xliii). And finally, with respect to "A Nocturnall," he suggested that "the passion is felt through the subtle and fantastic web of dialectic" (II, xlv). As well, a survey of Grierson's Introduction to "Songs and Sonets" reveals that he found that "Donne's wit is always touched with passion; his passion is always witty" (II, 9), while in notes to specific poems, he remarked upon Donne's "refined and extravagant subtlety" in "A Nocturnall" (II, 38), and observed that "Donne's precision is as marked as his subtlety" in "The Extasie" (II, 42).

Each of these remarks by Grierson contributes to a view of Donne which is wholly consistent with Yeats's letter. Yeats's turn of phrase is, of course, more memorable; yet the general sentiment and certain key words, such as 'precision' or 'precise,' 'passion,' 'subtle' or 'subtleties,' are found over and over in Grierson's remarks. Indeed, even Grierson appears to have been impressed with Yeats's letter since he, in his turn, appropriated Yeats's description of Donne for the conclusion to the Introduction to the edition of Donne which he prepared for the Oxford Standard Authors Series in 1933. His own comments at the close of that Introduction provide further evidence of the essential compatibility of his views with Yeats's, as he remarked upon Donne's influence among modern poets in a sentence that points directly at Yeats:

> No English poet of the past has exercised a stronger influence upon the poetry of the younger poets of to-day, for their experiments too have a root in the consciousness that the ugly and the beautiful are strangely blended in passionate experience, their prosody is a result of an effort to keep metre in touch, not alone with music, but with human speech, phrases and cadences such as men do use, and their poetry seeks to charge itself, not with experience only, but with the metaphysic which strives to transcend and to interpret experience. (1933 ed., xlvii)

But returning to Yeats's 1912 letter, it remains to note that Yeats's debt to Grierson extends beyond language to syntax as he appears to have adopted Grierson's manner of using pairs of descriptive words, joined by an 'and.' Indeed, he seems to have fixed upon Grierson's emphasis upon the subtlety and passion of Donne's poetry, as well as his observation of the combination of that passion with intellect, wit and thought.[11] And although Grierson notes these characteristics throughout his Introduction and notes, they are most often associated with "Twicknam Garden" and "A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day," poems suspected of being written to and about the Countess of Bedford and of special interest to Yeats. Again, Yeats's interests coincide remarkably well with Grierson's. Thus, while it may be suggested that Grierson's language and many of his observations are typical of his time, so that Yeats might have found them elsewhere, Yeats's use of that language and apparent attention to Grierson's remarks point to the particular importance of Grierson's edition. Similarities in language, syntax, subject and focus of interest between Yeats's letter and Grierson's remarks, all suggest that Yeats had read Grierson's work carefully and, in that reading discovered how he would express Donne's importance to himself.

Further, the importance of the Grierson edition is apparent in similar fashion in a later reference to the "spiritual torture of Donne" in "Bishop Berkeley" (1931) (E&I, 399). Much earlier, Grierson had pointed to Donne's "tormented passion and wit" (II, x), his "passionate, intellectual, self-tormenting soul" (II, xxx) and his "tortured wit" (II, xlix) in his Introduction, while in his commentary on the divine poems, he had described Donne's "tormented, intellectual style" (II, 225),

his "intellectual, tormented, wire-drawn style" (II, 229), his "wire-drawn and tormented poem" (II, 241) and his "tense and torturing will" (248). In view of earlier parallels, Yeats's use of the word 'torture' legitimately evokes all of these descriptions, indicating that the impression of Grierson's remarks remained with Yeats throughout his career.

Finally, the one new matter which Grierson's remarks seem to have raised was Yeats's interest in Donne's relationship with the Countess of Bedford. Yeats first explored that interest in a postscript to his 1912 letter:

> I find it difficult to believe from the evidence you give that Donne was not the lover of Lady Bedford. You I notice still doubt it but as George Moore would say 'I hope for the best.' The poem written on the supposition of her death [i.e. "A Nocturnall." See Grierson, II, xxii-iii, 10)], if it indeed refers to her, seems to me conclusive. No courtly compliment could go so far, no courtly beauty accept such compliments--and then he thinks her dead and so may well speak out. (L, 571)

These remarks may be traced directly back to Grierson's notes where he suggests that the "Nocturnall" was written in 1612 when Donne thought Lady Bedford was dead or dying (II, xxii, but especially II, 10). In particular, Grierson is concerned about the significance of Donne's manner of address because of the social and poetic conventions of his day, and because Donne was addressing his patron:

> But the Nocturnall is a sincerer and profounder poem than Twicknam Garden, and it is more difficult to imagine it the expression of a conventional sentiment. . . . Any interpretation of so enigmatical a poem must be conjectural, but before one denied too positively that its subject was Lady Bedford--perhaps her illness in 1612--one would need to answer two questions, how far could a conventional passion inspire a strain so sincere, and what was Donne's feeling for Lady Bedford and hers for him? (II, xxii, xxiii);

and,

> The third verse speaks a stronger language than that of Petrarchan adoration. Still it is difficult for us to estimate aright all that was allowed to a 'servant' under the accepted convention. (II, 10)

Yeats considers both of these questions in his postscript to Grierson. In a general sense, the queries of both men may be regarded as part of an attempt to assess Donne's sincerity and discover the extent to which his poems are a combination of experience and convention, a question of some importance to an age whose poets admired the poetry of the past but were unable to use the conventions which they had inherited to capture their own experience. It was of special importance to Yeats as a poet attempting to discover how personal experience may be expressed in poetry of public and universal significance. And although the issue appears to have been raised by Grierson, it became of greater importance to Yeats as his imagination seized upon the possibilities of Donne's situation. For his part, Grierson was even more cautious in his later Introduction:

> I have a lurking suspicion that Twicknam Garden and St. Lucies Day were exquisite and passionate compliments to his great Lady-patron, Lucy, Countess of Bedford, who occupied Twickenham Park from 1608 to 1617. (1933 ed., xxi)

And so the matter was dropped. Yeats, however, continued to speculate on the nature of the relationship between Donne and his patron, as he reported in another letter to Grierson, written almost fourteen years later, in February 1926:

> I have been reading your Donne again. . . . especially that intoxicating 'St Lucies Day' which I consider always an expression of passion and proof that he was the Countess of Bedford's lover. I have used the arrangement of the rhymes in the stanzas for a poem of my own, just finished. (L, 710)

Quite obviously Yeats's later letter affirms the continuing importance of Grierson's edition of Donne. In particular, it substantiates the suggestion that Yeats's admiration for the 'St Lucies Day' poem was inspired by Grierson's earlier remarks, since he chose to repeat his speculation in another letter to Grierson. In any event, that admiration persisted. The relationship between Donne and Lady Bedford, which Grierson had suspected and which Yeats wished to see behind Donne's poem, seemed in Yeats's mind to have inspired an archetypal 'expression of passion' which fascinated Yeats as late as 17 December 1937 when he referred to it in his Christmas message to Dorothy Wellesley:

> My dear Dorothy, I send you a little book about your favourite poem as a substitute for the old-fashioned Christmas card. The Phoenix was, it seems, the Duchess of Bedford, and if you look up Donne's poem 'St Lucy's Day,' a poem of great passion, I think you will be convinced, as I am, that to console herself, perhaps for the faithlessness of the Turtle, she had an affair with Donne. (L, 902)

The importance to Yeats of "a poem of great passion" must not be underestimated. In "Anima Hominis" he declared that it is "not permitted to a man who takes up pen or chisel, to seek originality, for passion is his only business . . ." (M, 339), while in "The Tragic Generation," in a remark specifically directed to Donne's poetry, and perhaps even "A Nocturnall," he attempted to describe how the poet must write so that "passion creates its most violent sensation" (A, 326). Therefore, what Yeats's imagination made of Donne's poem and the critical suggestions offered by Grierson, both distinguishes Yeats from Grierson who appears to have been content to let the matter drop, and illustrates how Grierson's work was of value to him; for even if Yeats's debt to Grierson were limited to his speculation about Donne's relationship with Lady Bedford,

Grierson's edition would still have to be ranked as an important influence on Yeats's career.

Although Yeats's encounter with Grierson's edition may be assessed from the perspective of his 1912 letter to Grierson, that encounter may also be explored through an examination of other aspects of Grierson's Introduction which independently confirm that both men approached Donne from the same critical context. Again, such confirmation should not be taken to imply that Yeats's response to Donne was significantly altered by his reading of Grierson's Introduction and notes, since Yeats's position with respect to Donne had been established many years before 1912. Rather, it must be seen as reinforcement of the importance of Grierson's edition as a reminder of Yeats's earlier development and as a focal point for his continuing examination of Donne's poetry.

For example, Grierson repudiated the criticism which descended from the eighteenth century and applied the very modern perception of Donne's apparent need to transmit the truth about experience to an analysis of Donne's love-poetry. As a result, he reached conclusions about Donne's language which may be profitably compared with many of Yeats's much earlier remarks. Grierson asserts that the language of Donne's poetry is appropriate to his desire to present "love as an actual, immediate experience in all its moods" (II, xxxiv). Because love was more to Donne than an "always . . . beautiful emotion, naturally expressing itself in delicate and beautiful language," the thought and imagery of Donne's poems was not limited to the simple and obvious (II, xxxiii). Indeed, according to Grierson, Donne recognized that to

> some natures love comes as above all things a force quickening the mind, intensifying its purely intellectual energy, opening new vistas of thought abstract and subtle, making the soul 'intensely, wondrously alive.' . . . A poem such as The Anniversarie or The Extasie . . . is a record of intense, rapid thinking, expressed in the simplest, most appropriate language--and it is a no whit less natural utterance of passion. (II, xxxiii)

The similarity between Grierson's 'natural utterance' and the 'personal utterance' to which Yeats referred in 1910 helps to locate, in their attention to language, the basic similarity underlying the principles which directed both men in their appreciation of Donne, and provides further evidence for the suggestion that Yeats responded favourably to Grierson's edition because he saw in it the application of his own principles to a reading of Donne's poetry. It also helps to explain why Yeats was particularly sensitive to the language of Grierson's remarks.

Attention to Grierson's criticism of Donne also points to what Yeats was trying to accomplish in his own poetry. Grierson remarks that "Donne's interest is his theme, love and women, and he uses words not for their own sake but to communicate his consciousness of these surprising phenomena in all their varying and conflicting aspects" (II, xlii). The suggestion that poets 'communicate their consciousness' is, of course, peculiarly modern; yet the word 'communicate' implies a public and social use of language which is at odds with the theories of language which had been devised by the Symbolists of the nineties and may, in fact, be related to the emphasis placed upon communication by the classical-humanists of the Renaissance, including Jonson and Donne. It is not, however, at odds with the views on the function of language which Yeats had been expressing throughout the early 1900's, nor with the acceptance of the poet's "duty to communicate" which had, in Kermode's

view, distinguished Yeats from his contemporaries in the pursuit of the 'Romantic Image' (RI, 67). Nor is it contrary to Yeats's response when Archibald McLeish called him a 'public' poet, that the word which he had not thought of before is a word he wants.

Yeats's tendency to echo the language of Grierson's remarks, without adopting their substance, is apparent in a fifth direct reference to Donne, from "The Tragic Generation," which ultimately pertains to the perception of metaphor in poetry:

> 'Literature now demands the . . . right of exploration of all that passes before the mind's eye, and merely because it passes.' Not a complete defence, for it substitutes a spiritual for a physical objectivity, but sufficient, it may be, for the moment, and to settle our place in the historical process.
>
> The critic might well reply that certain of my generation delighted in writing with an unscientific partiality for subjects long forbidden. Yet is it not most important to explore especially what has been long forbidden, and to do this not only 'with the highest moral purpose,' like the followers of Ibsen, but gaily, out of sheer mischief, or sheer delight in that play of the mind? Donne could be as metaphysical as he pleased, and yet never seemed unhuman and hysterical as Shelley often does, because he could be as physical as he pleased; and besides, who will thirst for the metaphysical, who have a parched tongue, if we cannot recover the Vision of Evil?
>
> I have felt in certain early works of my own which I have long abandoned, and here and there in the work of others of my generation, a slight, sentimental sensuality which is disagreeable, and does not exist in the work of Donne, let us say, because he, being permitted to say what he pleased, was never tempted to linger, or rather to pretend that we can linger, between spirit and sense. How often had I heard men of my time talk of the meeting of spirit and sense, yet there is no meeting but only change upon the instant, and it is by the perception of a change, like the sudden 'blacking out' of the lights of the stage, that passion creates its most violent sensation. (A, 325-26)

Although these remarks were written for The Trembling of the Veil, which was published in 1920-21, at least eight years after the appearance of Grierson's edition, the manner in which Yeats invoked Donne as an example confirms that the particular expression of Grierson's comments had left a lasting impression.

Grierson's introduction had, of course, been aimed at providing an exposition of Donne's poetry and it is possible to see in it Grierson's application of modern poetic principles and needs to his analysis of Donne's poetry. Thus, the matters he chose to discuss, like his suggestion that poets 'communicate their consciousness,' were almost certainly more important as contemporary problems than as issues which had preoccupied Donne in the Renaissance. Of special note in this regard were the current theories of Donne's seeming ability to comprehend love as a combination of physical and spiritual elements. In an age which seemed unremitting in its search for what would later be termed a 'unified sensibility,' and when a growing need for physical verification accompanied general skepticism of matters of the spirit, a poet who seemed capable of accommodating the most disparate elements of his own nature, without repudiating his physicality, had a special value which in their own ways both Yeats and Grierson recognized.

Grierson had, for example, declared that the "true escape from courtly or ascetic idealism was a poetry which should do justice to love as a passion in which body and soul alike have their part, and of which there is no reason to repent" (II, xlvi). Further, with respect to Donne's ability to transmit the experience of love in his poetry, Grierson commented that the "passion that burns in Donne's most out-spoken elegies, and wantons in the Epithalamia, is not cast out in The Anniversarie or The Canonization, but absorbed. It is purified and enriched by being brought into harmony with his whole nature, spiritual as well as physical" (II, xlvi). In seeing 'no cleavage' between Donne's most sensual and most spiritual love-songs, and by suggesting that the passion which is

the root of both is in harmony with Donne's whole nature, Grierson almost surely described a condition which approached 'unified sensibility.' Moreover, this 'Donne' in whom Grierson perceived that "the spiritual sense . . . was as real a thing as the restless and unruly wit, or the sensual, passionate temperament" (II, xxx) was surely the same 'Donne' whom Yeats said "could be as metaphysical as he pleased . . . because he could be as physical as he pleased" and who "being permitted to say what he pleased, was never tempted to linger, or rather to pretend that we can linger, between spirit and sense" (A, 326), and so could write of passion that creates its own violent sensation.

But Yeats's remarks from "The Tragic Generation" may also be glossed with passages from "Anima Hominis" and "Hodos Chameliontos" which illustrate that, however complex, Yeats's theories were all of a piece. As well, these passages show that by the time he came to write The Trembling of the Veil Yeats had fitted Donne into his own theories of poetry and composition. In "Anima Hominis," as in "Tragic Generation," the poet whose business is with passion is distinguished from sentimentalists who stop short of the revelation of reality:

> Nor has any poet I have read of or heard of or met with been a sentimentalist. The other self, the anti-self or the antithetical self . . . comes but to those who are no longer deceived, whose passion is reality. The sentimentalists are practical men who believe in money, in position, in a marriage bell, and whose understanding of happiness is to be so busy whether at work or at play that all is forgotten but the momentary aim. (M, 331)

Here, as in the passage from "Hodos Chameliontos" cited below, the opposites to be embraced are expressed in terms of the theory of the mask which Yeats extended into a description of the poetic composition of men like Dante and Villon to which the description of Donne's poetry

in "The Tragic Generation" may be related:

> . . . they are mirrored in all the suffering of desire. The two halves of their nature are so completely joined that they seem to labour for their objects, and yet to desire whatever happens, being at the same instant predestinate and free, creation's very self. We gaze at such men in awe, because we gaze not at a work of art but at the re-creation of the man through that art, the birth of a new species of man, and it may even seem that the hairs of our heads stand up, because that birth, that re-creation, is from terror. Had not Dante and Villon understood that their fate wrecked what life could not rebuild, had they lacked their Vision of Evil, had they cherished any species of optimism, they could but have found a false beauty, or some momentary instinctive beauty, and suffered no change at all. . . . (A, 273)

Finally, at least two remarks made near the close of Yeats's career illustrate both the persistence and the fundamental importance of the observations which emerged from his reading of Donne. For example, in one of his last essays, "Modern Poetry: A Broadcast" (1938), Yeats remarked that he thought "all profound philosophy must come from terror. An abyss opens under our feet; inherited convictions, the pre-suppositions of our thought, those Fathers of the Church Lionel Johnson expounded, drop into the abyss" (E&I, 502). In addition, in a late poem, "Lapis Lazuli" (1936), it is clear that this terror is accompanied by "the sudden 'blacking out' of the lights of the stage" which Yeats had earlier used to describe his reaction to Donne:

> All perform their tragic play,
> There struts Hamlet, there is Lear,
> That's Ophelia, that Cordelia;
> Yet they, should that last scene be there,
> The great curtain about to drop,
> If worthy their prominent part in the play,
> Do not break up their lines to weep.
> They know that Hamlet and Lear are gay;
> Gaiety transfiguring all that dread.
> All men have aimed at, found and lost;
> Black out; Heaven blazing into the head:
> Tragedy wrought to its uttermost.
>
> (CP, 338)

Inevitably, commentators have taken note of Yeats's remarks in "The Tragic Generation" and applied them to his art. Cleanth Brooks, for example, uses them to illustrate that "Sailing to Byzantium" is "a metaphysical poem quite as much as it is a symbolist poem." Indeed, for him, they testify "explicitly" to the "ultimate identity of metaphysical and symbolist poetry." Paraphrasing, he suggests that "Yeats, in his 'Sailing to Byzantium' can deal with the natural and artificial as much as he pleases without seeming hysterical or sentimental, because he can be thoroughly unliterary and natural" (64).

Some years later, Thomas Henn adapted those remarks to emphasize the physicality of Yeats's art, noting that, like Donne who "avoids becoming inhuman or morbid 'because he could be as physical as he pleased,'" Yeats "pulls back his verse from the sentimental and morbid by the physical" (LT, 169).

Finally, Kermode offers yet another paraphrase, this one to explain the rarity of symbolic art, the kind in which unity of being is sought: "modern artists, unlike Donne, linger uneasily between spirit and sense, unable to conquer the notion of their incompatibility, and so attain only a 'slight sentimental sensuality which is disagreeable.'" Thus, for Kermode as well, Yeats's remarks have a general application. Moreover, he not only agrees with Yeats's observations, he also suggests that this view of Donne, which he connects to the lines on Elizabeth Drury which "haunted" Yeats, "is the same . . . as that which is still generally accepted" (RI, 53-55).

On the other hand, Richard Ellmann (Yeats: The Man and the Masks

(New York: Dutton, 1948)) cites Yeats's remark without comment, to describe the mature Yeats as a poet of the passionate moment: "'How often had I heard men of my time talk of the meeting of spirit and sense, yet there is no meeting but only change upon the instant . . .'" (294). Indeed, what Yeats actually described was, fundamentally, the way in which he used metaphor to communicate the passionate moment, and thus what he acknowledged was his debt to Donne for lessons in the use of metaphor. In this regard Yeats's remarks illustrate Cleanth Brooks's observation that "the significant relationship between the modernist poets and the seventeenth-century poets of wit lies here--in their common conception of the use of metaphor." Yet, as Brooks continues, it is apparent that he has overlooked at least one of the most attractive characteristics of seventeenth-century metaphors, especially Donne's--their ability to elicit effect from the combination of opposites:

> Ultimately, it is not Donne's personality which has fascinated the moderns--his tortured doubts, his 'monstrous ingenuities,' his modern 'sensuous cynicism.' Such descriptions make very pretty reading; and doubtless his picture of a romanticized Donne furnishes the superficial critic with the most plausible rationalization of the tremendous resurgence of interest in Donne. It does not touch the real reason for Donne's renewed importance for poets. The significant relationship is indicated by the fact that the metaphysical poets and the modernists stand opposed to both the neoclassic and Romantic poets on the issue of metaphor. (11)

More than "pretty reading," however, those descriptions, characterized as they are by a yoking of opposites like "sensuous cynicism," provide a key to the nature of the metaphors devised by the moderns.

Eliot's celebrated "Patient etherized upon a table," for example, is notable for its surprising juxtaposition of opposites, as is Yeats's much earlier "ice burned" from "The Cold Heaven" (CP, 140). Further, Yeats's observation of Donne's pedantry and obscenity in his letter to Grierson and his subsequent description of Mabel Beardsley as a "pedant in passion" for whom "penance is the play" ("Upon a Dying Lady," CP, 178) is similarly effective because of its conjunction of opposites.[13] Indeed, Yeats's descriptions are direct descendants of those late nineteenth-century characterizations of Donne and, with metaphors such as that from "The Cold Heaven," confirm the fundamental importance of the way of thinking with which Yeats became familiar through his knowledge of the Romanticized Donne which, rather than detracting from Donne's importance on the issue of metaphor, complements and even helps to determine the nature of that importance.

Yet Yeats's affinities with Grierson make it apparent that he did not work in isolation from those around him. His distinction as a poet must therefore be attributed to what he was able to make of the thoughts and activities which impinged upon him. Grierson's assessment of Donne, for example, shows what a modern reader would like to find in Donne's poetry; yet Yeats undoubtedly took from it clues to the needs of that modern reader which helped him to write poetry which was responsive to the modern condition. Certainly Grierson remained a figure much respected by Yeats, as evidenced by the 1926 letter published by Wade. And certainly he is inextricably associated with Yeats's interest in Donne. As already noted, he may be associated with five of Yeats's six direct references to Donne and the impact of Yeats's reading of his edition of

the poems has yet to be considered in this study. It will be examined at a later point, when Donne's influence in Yeats's poems themselves will be considered in some detail. Even at this stage in discussions, however, it must be concluded that Grierson occupies an important place in the study of the value of the Renaissance to Yeats.

Yeats's sixth direct reference to Donne, in "To a Young Beauty" (1918), is related to his knowledge of Grierson only in so far as his interest in Donne was sustained by the publication of Grierson's edition of 1912. It is more probable that Yeats arrived at that reference through his interest in Landor and with the help of his father and Ezra Pound, both admirers of Landor.[14] Yeats's reference must be mentioned here in passing, however, because it indicates that he not only made Donne part of his literary background, he also considered him a member of a larger complex of literary associations, and, because it is the only direct reference to Donne in Yeats's poetry:

> There is not a fool can call me friend,
> And I may dine at journey's end
> With Landor and with Donne.
>
> (CP, 157)

As noted earlier this reference has been briefly mentioned by several Yeats specialists and at least one commentator on Donne. For the latter, Clay Hunt, the parallel between Landor and Donne which may be inferred from the concluding lines of the poem clarifies Yeats's analysis of Donne's personality and in turn, re-inforces similarities between Yeats and Donne (Donne's Poetry, 165; 177-78). For others, including Harold Bloom who cites the reference as an indication of Jonson's

influence as opposed to Donne's, Landor and Donne being paired opposites (Yeats, 168), the remark is important as an acknowledgement of Yeats's technical masters, as well as a statement about the poet in his old age.

None, however, has attempted more than a superficial explanation for the particular yoking of Landor and Donne, even though extensive parallels may be traced between Yeats's poem and Landor's Imaginary Conversation, "Walton, Cotton, and Oldways," where Walton and Cotton discuss poetry as they journey to dine at Oldway's home at Ashbourne. As they travel, Walton advises Cotton, an aspiring poet, concerning the qualities of good poetry, the proper behaviour of a successful poet, and the kind of company he should keep--the very topics considered in Yeats's poem which is generally regarded as an admonishment to Iseult Gonne for her conduct. Because dinner conversation at Oldways' is a discussion of the merits of Donne's poetry, there is some literary precedent for Landor and Donne as 'dinner companions.' There is also some historical justification for connecting Donne with a dinner 'at journey's end' as a recognition of excellence after many ignominious years in as much as the real Walton has recorded in his Life of Dr. John Donne that Donne was made Dean of St Pauls at a dinner with the king.[15] Finally, Vivien Mercier suggests that the concluding lines of "To a Young Beauty" may be glossed with another of Landor's Conversations, "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," where an imaginary 'Landor' defends excellence against declining literary standards and decides that he will receive sufficient fame from a few for his best 'conversations,' even though he must acknowledge that that recognition has come very late, or

as he puts it, he "shall dine late; but the dining room will be well lighted, and the guests few and select."[16] In view of Yeats's other references, Donne was obviously one of the select few whose influence Yeats acknowledged. His presence with Landor in "To a Young Beauty" points to the originality of Yeats's approach to Donne; yet it also testifies to Yeats's participation in the intellectual activities of his time. As is the case with his indirect references and allusions, to be considered presently, Yeats's direct references to Donne illustrate how he responded to elements of the current situation and made them his own.

2. A Donne Allusion: 'The Thinking of the Body'

Just as Yeats's affinities with Grierson and the nature of his direct references to Donne provide evidence of his participation in the intellectual life of his time, so his adaptation of Donne's description of Elizabeth Drury in his Discoveries of 1906-07 reflects his awareness of Donne's current reputation. As Tillotson and Duncan have already shown, that description was especially popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tillotson reports that it was "in all periods the most freqently quoted passage" ("Donne's Poetry in the Nineteenth Century (1800-72)," 312), while Duncan remarks that

> during the 19th century the passage from Donne's "The Second Anniverary" about Elizabeth Drury's speaking soul and almost thinking body was quoted more than any other lines from Donne, and it apparently came to be regarded as Donne's expression of a psychological and aesthetic theory. In the 19th century the concept of the union of thought and feeling throve in an intellectual climate particularly sympathetic to the 17th century. (Revival, 218, n. 17)

Thus it is not surprising , especially in view of his later confession that he and the other Rhymers tried to write like the lyricists of the seventeenth-century, that Yeats was also particularly attracted to that passage from The Second Anniversary. Nor is it surprising that he incorporated Donne's description into his own theory of art appreciation in Discoveries. What is noteworthy, but not necessarily surprising, is that his attraction to the phrase was manifest in an analysis of the current situation which produced statements which defined the modern condition two decades before Eliot's now more famous, but as Kermode has

already pointed out, much less satisfactory and less poetically fruitful, expressions of the same "aesthetic-historical complex" (RI, 145).

Yeats's adaptation of Donne's phrase in 1906-07 was yet another facet of his own contemporary interest in the Renaissance. He had already written essays on Shakespeare and Spenser, and in September of 1906, had written to Bullen of his interest in Jonson and the Elizabethans, but specifically mentioning the Jacobean dramatists, Dekker and Chapman (L, 478-79). Further, in the spring of 1907 he visited Urbino and appears to have been reading Castiglione's account of sixteenth-century Italian life in The Courtier (Hone, 221).[17] The fact that "The Thinking of the Body," where Yeats most overtly alludes to Donne's phrase, occurs in the only portion of Discoveries to first appear after Yeats's Italian visit suggests that Castiglione may have participated in Yeats's use of Donne in much the same way as in his use of Jonson, although to a lesser extent, since his definition of beauty, which Yeats recalls as "the spoil and monument of the victory of the soul," undoubtedly helped to clarify what Yeats meant by the "thinking of the body" which is more directly derived from Donne's "body thought."[18]

However, while Castiglione and other influences may have had a complementary impact on Yeats at that time, his independent adaptation of Donne's phrase is clearly evident throughout his analysis and projected solution of the problems inherent in the current situation. The major problem which he identifies and attempts to solve throughout Discoveries stems from his observation of a disequilibrium or dissociation--although he does not use Eliot's term--between body and soul, the physical and the non-physical, which results in a neglect of the body: "We have grown jealous of the body," he declares near the end of his series,

"and we dress it in unshapely clothes, that we may cherish aspiration alone (E&I, 296). His solution, then, is a re-emphasis, or as he puts it, a "resurrection of the body" (297). Throughout his series he points to the need for the total engagement of the individual in life and in art. He observes, for example, that "an exciting person . . . will display the greatest volume of personal energy" which "must seem to come out of the body as out of the mind" (266). He expresses the deficiency causing the disequilibrium as a loss in personality, in our delight in the whole man--blood, imagination, intellect running together" (266), detecting a resultant thirst "for mere force, mere personality, for the tumult of the blood" (267). Finally, he most obviously adapts Donne's phrase in the section entitled "The Thinking of the Body" where he describes an art which involves the whole man, his body as well as his mind. Commenting on the effect of two pictures of Venice, a Canaletto and a Frans Franken, he remarks that

> neither painting would move us at all, if our thought did not rush out to the edges of our flesh and it is so with all good art. . . . Art bids us touch and taste and hear and see the world and shrinks from what Blake calls mathematic form, from every abstract thing, from all that is of the brain only, from all that is not a fountain jetting from the entire hopes, memories, and sensations of the body. (E&I, 292-93).

Yeats's description of that art and the response which it evokes is clearly a direct descendent of Donne's description of Elizabeth Drury:

> . . . wee understood
> Her by her sight; her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheekes, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one might almost say, her body thought.
> (I, 258, ll. 243-46)

The continuing importance of Donne's description can hardly be overestimated. It is perhaps best illustrated by Yeats's later description of a portrait by Strozzi where Donne's phrase is strikingly apparent in one of his most vivid accounts of the effects of Unity of Being:

> Whatever thought broods in the dark eyes of that Venetian gentleman has drawn its life from his whole body; it feeds upon it as the flame feeds upon the candle--and should that thought be changed, his pose would change, his very cloak would rustle, for his whole body thinks. (A, 292)

Yet, the differences between Yeats and Donne in this matter are telling, and as Rajan has already noted, not accidental:

> Passion comes before reason, blood before imagination, touching and tasting before hearing and seeing. The purity and eloquence that 'so distinctly wrought' in Elizabeth Drury's face are replaced by thought rushing out impetuously to the edges of our flesh. ("Yeats and the Renaissance," 111)

Donne's "eloquent blood" pulsates with imagination and intellect in Yeats's triumvirate, and elsewhere becomes the "tumult of the blood" which is otherwise a "thirst" for mere force and personality. In addition, when Yeats recast Donne's "body thought" as "the thinking of the body," his present participle captured the increased energy of the Yeatsean concept in which thought has become a physical activity, in contrast to Donne's assumption that physical activity has been refined into a spiritual condition.

The progress of the soul from which Yeats isolated Donne's description of Elizabeth Drury was itself an integral part of Renaissance thought. It forms the basis of three of Donne's most important poems, all of which, from the condition of his copy of Grierson's edition, appear to have interested Yeats--"The Progresse of the Soule (Metempsychosis)," and

The Anniversaries, An Anatomie of the World and Of The Progresse of the Soule.[19]

In the first, metempsychosis provides the basis for a bitter satire of women, the fallen condition in general, and the corruption of the soul by the body in particular. Donne appears to have been inspired by social and religious frustrations of the kind which Yeats suffered as he approached old age in the hostile, conflict-ridden society of the twentieth century. More specifically, Donne's poem may have provided Yeats with a model for his own satiric treatment of metempsychosis in The Herne's Egg and the conversations of Robartes and Aherne in A Vision. Even though Yeats adapted Donne's use of the progress to suit his distinctly modern purposes, he never denied the validity of the concept of the transmigration of souls. In fact, he created his own version of the soul's progress in his Vision, especially in "The Soul in Judgement." Indeed, the very existence of A Vision testifies to the importance to Yeats of a cosmic context for both his life and work. At the same time, it is also indicative of his twentieth-century concerns that the greatest bulk of that Vision is taken up by the phases of human personality fulfilled while the soul inhabits the body here on earth.

Donne's treatment of that progress in the two Anniversaries undoubtedly interested Yeats for at least two reasons: Donne's description of Elizabeth Drury, and the picture of the seventeenth century which serves as its context. Although it is probable that Yeats was familiar with the latter before 1912, he could scarcely have failed to note it after reading Grierson's account of parallels between the modern world and the troubled

times which Donne describes:

one of the most interesting strands of thought common to the twin [Anniversary] poems is the reflection of the disintegrating effect of the New Learning. Copernicus' displacement of the earth, and the consequent disturbance of the medieval cosmology with its concentric arrangement of the elements and heavenly bodies, arrests and disturbs Donne's imagination. . . . No other poet of the seventeenth century known to me shows the same sensitiveness to the consequences of the new discoveries of traveller, astronomer, physiologist and physician as Donne. (II, 188-89)

Elsewhere, Grierson terms the consequences of those discoveries a "dislocation of thought" on the order of that which later occurred in the nineteenth century. He suggests that like Tennyson,

Donne is much concerned with the progress of science, the revolution which was going on in men's knowledge of the universe, and its disintegrating effect on accepted beliefs. To him the new astronomy is as bewildering as its displacement of the earth and disturbance of a concentric universe as the new geology was to be to Tennyson with the vistas which it opened into the infinities of time, the origin and the destiny of man. (II, xxviii)

Similarly, with or without Grierson's help, Yeats would scarcely have failed to note the modern relevance of Donne's description of his times:

> The new Philosophy calls all in doubt
> The element of fire is quite put out;
> The Sun is lost, and the' earth, and no mans wit
> Can well direct him where to looke for it.
> And freely men confesse that this world's spent,
> When in the Planets, and the Firmament
> They seeke so many new; they see that this
> Is crumbled out againe to his Atomies.
> 'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone;
> All just supply, and all Relation:
> Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, all things forgot
> For every man alone thinks he hath got
> To be a Phoenix, and that then can bee
> None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee.
> (The First Anniversary, I, 237-38, ll. 205-18)

Indeed, Yeats's own description of his times in Discoveries--"the English have driven away the kings, and turned the prophets into demagogues, and you cannot have health among a people if you have not prophet, priest and king" (E&I, 264)--may have been inspired by Donne's version of that Renaissance commonplace:

> All just supply, and all Relation:
> Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot.
> (ll. 214-15)

In addition, as already noted by Le Comte (Grace to a Witty Sinner, 246-47), Donne's lines from the First Anniversary seem to stand behind Yeats's description of his own dislocated times in the opening stanza of "The Second Coming":

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.
> (CP, 210-11)

In Donne's poems, however, the conflict between the belief which sustains the progress of the soul, and the scientific discoveries undermining that belief, is overcome by the successful progress of Elizabeth Drury. Her soul has clearly gone to heaven "As well t'enjoy, as get perfection" (Second Anniversary, l. 318). Meanwhile, she has left here on earth,

> . . . such a bodie, as even shee
> Only in Heaven could learne, how it can bee
> Made better; for shee rather was two soules,
> Or like to full on both sides written Rols,
> Where eyes might reade upon the outward skin,
> As strong Records for God, as mindes within;
> Thee who by making full perfection grow,
> Peeces a Circle, and still keeps it so,
> Long'd for, and longing for it, to heaven is gone,
> Where she receives and gives addition.
> (I, 265-66, ll. 501-10)

In contrast to Donne, with his emphasis on the body as evidence of a purer, more worthy state, Yeats isolates the point at which the soul most fully animates the body because it is the point at which the whole man most completely participates in life on this earth, when Unity of Being seems to have been achieved. Indeed, while Donne describes the refinement of body to spirit, Yeats reverses the process, to describe the infusion of spirit into body. As always in Yeats's work, the thrust of the modern is earthbound and physical.

That refinement as well as the progress of the soul is clearly evident behind other poems by Donne as well, including "Aire and Angels," "The Blossome" and "The Extasie." In the latter the conflict between body and soul is dramatized in the light of the ironic truth that the body is necessary to the soul during its sojourn here on earth. The difference between the body and soul is also the basis of Marvell's treatment of their relationship in his "A Dialogue Between Soul and Body." Structurally, Marvell's poem is more closely related to Yeats's "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," both of which Una Nelly contrasts to Donne's "The Blossome" where the heart or soul converses with the body (The Poet Donne, 13).

Donne described the concept of man's nature which stands behind "The Extasie" in a passage from one of his sermons which both Grierson and A. J. Smith cite as a gloss to his line, "That subtile knot, which makes us man":

> In the composition and making of natural man, the body is not the man, nor the soul is not the man, but the union of these two makes up the man; the spirits in a man which are the thin and active part of the blood, and so are of a kind of middle nature, between soul and body, those spirits are able to do, and they do the office, to unite and apply the faculties of the soul to the organs of the body, and so there is man. (Donne, Sermons, II, 261-62; Cited by Smith, John Donne: The Complete English Poems (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971), 370; and Grierson, I, 45)

Thus, the body shares importance with the soul. It provides the spirits which make their union possible and allows that union to reveal the soul. Souls "forbeare" bodies because,

> They'are ours [souls'], though they'are not wee,
> Wee are
> The intelligences, they the spheare.
> We owe them thankes, because they thus,
> Did us, to us, at first convay,
> Yeelded their forces, sense, to us,
> Nor are drosse to us, but allay.
> (I, 53)

Moreover, in this poem, which Grierson calls "one of the most important of the lyrics as a statement of Donne's metaphysic of love, of the interconnexion and mutual dependence of body and soul" (II, 41), Donne describes the course of "pure lovers soules" which

> . . . must . . . descend
> T'affections, and to faculties,
> Which sense may reach and apprehend,
> Else a great Prince in prison lies.
> To'our bodies turne wee then, that so
> Weake men on love reveal'd may looke;

Loves mysteries in soules doe grow,
But yet the body is his booke.
And if some lover, such as well,
Have heard this dialogue of one,
Let him still marke us, he shall see
Small change, when we'are to bodies gone.
(I, 53)

Thus, in spite of the elaborate metaphysic which lies behind the poem, inspiring its imagery, "The Extasie" finally directs attention to the body and to human experience which ultimately validates all knowledge, the final irony being that the truths which can only be apprehended by disembodied souls, can only be finally communicated through the body.

Yet another seventeenth-century view of the relationship between soul and body is evident in Marvell's "A Dialogue Between Soul and Body" which is relevant to this study because it almost certainly served as a model for Yeats's "A Dialogue of Self and Soul." As their titles suggest, the subject and form of both poems is similar. In both, the traditional dualism between body and soul is distorted to give favourable emphasis to the claims of the body at the expense of those of the soul. In both, form reflects meaning.

Marvell's poem, for example, consists of four stanzas, alternately 'spoken' by the Soul and Body. The first three stanzas are each ten lines long, while the fourth extends to fourteen lines. In the first forty lines, a balance is maintained between the Soul and Body, as both

seem to share the same degree of misery, described in the same number of lines. That balance is upset, however, in the last four lines, where the Body is permitted a final sympathetic argument for its own claims:

> What but a Soul could have the wit
> To build me up for Sin so fit?
> So Architects do square and hew,
> Green Trees that in the Forest grew.
> (The Poems of Andrew Marvell, ed. Hugh MacDonald (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), 16)

For Leonard Unger, those last lines spoken by the Body express "a kind of unity, or desire for unity." Marvell's departure from traditional dualism, where the balance falls in favour of the soul, signals his participation in the search for unity which is apparent in the work of other seventeenth-century poets, most notably Donne's ("Fusion and Experience," in The Man in the Name (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 126).

Ultimately designed to present a concluding expression of Unity of Being, the form of Yeats's poem similarly reflects the dominance of the Self. The poem itself is divided into two sections. Although Yeats has manipulated the speeches of both the Self and the Soul to the apparent advantage of the Soul in Section I, those speeches are all, in fact, directed towards the philosophical reversal of the second Section

which belongs entirely to the Self. In three of the five stanzas of Section I, the Soul argues in response to the Self's recollection of love and war. But in spite of the formal advantages accorded to the Soul, the richness and vitality of the Self's argument dominates, couched in language which the Soul cannot match but only negate, since its "tongue's a stone." Physical reality prevails over abstraction. The Self dominates because life, in spite of--or because of--the 'crimes' of birth and death, is more challenging than the dark quarter of the Soul "where all thought is done."

By the end of Section I Yeats has clearly decided to opt for challenge and face up to the consequences which ensue when man's nature is fully revealed in the absence of abstract restraints. Dialogue becomes monologue as the Self vehemently re-affirms the life of the body:

> I am content to live it all again
> And yet again, if it be life to pitch
> Into the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch,
> A blind man battering blind men;
> Or into that most fecund ditch of all,
> The folly that man does
> Or must suffer, if he woos
> A proud woman not kindred of his soul.
> (CP, 267)

The Self is determined to usurp the Soul's domain. It trumps the final argument of the Soul by announcing its ability to 'forgive itself the lot,' defying the Soul's assertion that "Only the dead can be forgiven." In the process, the Self is intent upon translating a metaphysical condition into physical reality:

> I am content to follow to its source
> Every event in action or in thought;
> Measure the lot; forgive myself the lot!
> When such as I cast out remorse
> So great a sweetness flows into the breast
> We must laugh and we must sing,
> We are blest by everything,
> Everything we look upon is blest.
> (CP, 267)

In "Dialogue of Self and Soul" the condition of blessedness which the Self determines to experience must be achieved on its terms. Similarly, in "Vacillation," a special moment of 'grace' comes to the poet as a physical experience, at an ordinary time and place:

> While on the shop and street I gazed
> My body of a sudden bla ed;
> And twenty minutes more or less
> It seemed, so great my happiness,
> That I was blessed and could bless.
> (CP, 284)

The conflict within man represented in the dialogue between Self (Body) and Soul clearly extends out into the world around him:

> Between extremities
> Man runs his course.
> (CP, 282)

Its special fascination for the poet is reflected in his images:

> . . . he that Attis' image hangs between
> That staring fury and the blind lush leaf
> May know not what he knows, but knows not grief.
> (CP, 283)

The tree of the second section of "Vacillation" which is half-flame, half-foliage, is Yeats's most important image of this conflict. It looks back to earlier references to more natural trees in "The Two Trees" and "The Coming of Wisdom with Time" and is itself naturalized in Section V, in the contrast between leafage guilded by summer sunlight and intricate branches revealed by winter moonlight. Ultimately, however, the conflict is re-directed into the individual since "the branches of the night and day" spring "from man's blood-sodden heart," a conclusion which looks forward to the "foul rag and bone shop" of "The Circus Animals' Desertion." Moreover, the assertion that conflict with the soul, the fury of fire, is necessary to the poet and keeps him from grief even though it does not provide him with knowledge, is affirmed in a concluding dialogue where total devotion to the Soul is again rejected. The Soul's offer of the fire of salvation is turned down in favour of pursuit of the Heart's own question, "What theme had Homer but original sin?" Thus, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" has been repeated. Von Hugel is dismissed in favour of Homer and his unchristened heart. Again, victory has been awarded to that which presents the greatest challenge to twentieth-century man for whom meaning must be made from experience.

As the closing lines of "The Circus Animals' Desertion" suggest, Yeats did not repudiate the conclusions reached in "Dialogue of Self and Soul" and "Vacillation." Indeed, those conclusions account for the thrust of poems like "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Byzantium" where Yeats's attempt to capture the Soul's quarter in his poetry is thwarted by the insistent presence of the energy of life. There too, however, Donne's influence remains in effect. Although as a poet of the twentieth century Yeats was forced to different solutions to the dilemma presented by the relationship between body and soul which also confronted Donne, he was indebted to Donne for his method of approach as well as his manner of treatment. Indeed, Joseph Duncan has already observed that in "Sailing to Byzantium" Yeats's tone approached that which is typically Donne's:

> his mind continuously plays lightly over deep feeling as well as the ponderous philosophical problems of being and becoming and the relation of the body and soul. There is a mature vision, alert and urbane, in his treatment of the body-soul dilemma as he refers to himself in "Monuments of unageing intellect' and knows that for his soul there is no 'singing school but studying / Monuments of its own magnificence.' Intellectual subtlety and an impressive erudition dance lightly together as Yeats, considering Byzantium as a symbol of art's transcendence of change, asks to be gathered into the 'artifice of eternity' and imagines that he himself is the Emperor's artificial bird of 'golden handwork' of which he has read. (Revival, 141)

As is evident in much of Yeats's poetry, it is the way in which he used his knowledge of Donne, including his adaptation of his description of Elizabeth Drury and the related parallels with the twentieth century which may be detected in the world of the Anniversaries, which provides the surest evidence of Yeats's distinctly original recognition of Donne's importance to modern poetry.

3. General Kinship: Other Donnean Echoes and Allusions in Yeats's Poetry

An admirable summary of Donne's general influence on modern poetry has been provided by Arnold Stein. It identifies areas where Yeats shared Donne's influence with other moderns, and also indirectly confirms the extent to which Yeats anticipated the needs of other moderns in his personal search for a style that would, in his words of 1908, help "to build up an image of myself, of my likes and dislikes, as a man alive today" ("Discoveries: Second Series," Massachusetts Review, 301). Stein's list of the stylistic qualities which moderns most appreciated in Donne's work may thus be profitably considered here in an attempt to identify the general character of his influence in Yeats's poetry.

For example, Stein notes that Donne's

> imaginative daring gave license to individual raids on modern experience. The satiric bent of his wit suited the temper of our times. The same can be said of his famous harshness and obscurity, of his cultivating the strain rather than the vein of poetry, of his writing for a small and select audience of connoisseurs, of his writing an urban poetry the main subject of which is the nature of man. Finally, the rich example of his uses of imagery fascinated our century and helped the better poets write better and the worse poets worse. (205)

He also mentions Donne's power "to concentrate thought in language," his "example for the 'poetry of inclusion,' and for the seriousness of wit and irony," as well as the attractiveness of his personality which allowed moderns "to identify aspects of their own problems with his." In particular, that personality is notable in Stein's eyes, for its "individualism," its "brilliant manoeuvres and tortured stresses" and its "fundamental seriousness, the manifest agony of spirit underlying the

great wit of his religious poetry and prose" (205).

However, as noted earlier, what Stein emphasizes most is what moderns have learned from Donne's "ability to talk verse, to use a syntax, and rhythm which seemed easily, naturally colloquial, and yet created an authentic language of poetry" (204). Referring to Eliot's emphasis on "the virtues of prose and the desirability of the 'non-poetic,'"[20] Stein asserts that

> Donne's precedent here is a commanding one; he was the central figure in a stylistic revolution that brought to bear on poetry the new rationalism being developed in prose. We now call that prose anti-Ciceronian, or Senecan, and we note the probable effects of the new science upon it; but the general pattern is clear: it emphasized matter, broke with some of the traditional forms of manner, cultivated abrupt immediacy, and attempted to convey the very process of the thought. (203-04)

What Stein says is doubtless true. Certainly he identifies the general stylistic change which took place after the turn of the century. His remarks are particularly relevant to this study because of his subsequent assertion that the "authentic language of poetry" which Donne created was envied by modern poets, but none "so often or so eloquently as Yeats" (204). Moreover, his references to "the ability to talk in verse" and to the development of a colloquial style in language, point not merely to language, but also to other aspects of Donne's influence made possible by skill in the use of the language, especially the successful dramatization of the self through the adoption of a series of roles.

Indeed, it is Stein's contention that "the problem of language in poetry is a constant, and constantly changing, one. . . . The earliness of Yeats's concern (by the 1890's), and the differences between his earlier and later poetry, should remind us how complicated the problem is" (204).

Stein correctly notes that there is "no one answer" to that problem, that "no single answer . . . will account for the diction of both Yeats and Eliot, not to mention other poets of distinguished merit." Certainly with regard to Yeats, concurrent Renaissance influences such as Jonson's must be taken into consideration. Yet, as Stein continues, "Donne's example, once recognized, did provide a model which few could ignore" (204).

Yeats was among the first to make that recognition and possibly the first to act upon it. Stein's remark about "the earliness of Yeats's concern" rightly directs attention to the history of Yeats's creative encounter with Donne which began long before the appearance of the Grierson edition and extended past the apex of his popularity. Yeats, in fact, turned to Donne out of authentic and personally felt needs and found in him solutions which complemented his other Renaissance discoveries.

None the less, the Grierson edition did have a significant effect on Yeats's poetry, as foreshadowed by the enthusiasm of his letter of 1912. Henn, for example, suggests that it gave Yeats "a new understanding of metaphysical poetry" (LT, 20) and that Yeats learned "much in technique" from Donne from 1912 onwards (LT, 40), while Joseph Duncan more eloquently observes that "a broader subject matter, a greater range and depth, and a sophisticated mixture of learning, grace and wit brought Yeats increasingly within the metaphysical tradition after his study of Donne in the Grierson edition" (Revival, 136).

Donne's influence may be detected in several poems written in, and immediately after, 1912, including "A Cold Heaven" (1912), "A Memory of Youth" (1912) and "Upon a Dying Lady" (1912-14). Although earlier poems also illustrate Yeats's interest in the Renaissance, they point to his use of Jonson rather than Donne. Moreover, while Jonson's influence is

properly dominant in poems which are public expressions of social and professional concerns in The Green Helmet and Other Poems and Poems Written in Discouragement, the appearance of Donne's influence approximately coincides with a shift in subject matter in poems which explore a more private world of the emotions, especially relations between men and women and man's confrontation with death. Since these themes persist and become increasingly important in subsequent work, especially the poems of The Wild Swans at Coole and Michael Robartes and the Dancer, Donne's influence also persists to make a distinctive contribution to Yeats's later poetry.

"The Cold Heaven" (1912) is one of the first poems in which the effects of Yeats's renewed interest in Donne are apparent. It may be distinguished from contemporary poems by its language, syntax and imagery and, in particular, by the appearance of what Ellmann terms the "dramatic metaphor" (Man and the Masks, 205)--all of which mark it as a poem within the metaphysical tradition.

Before pursuing Ellmann's observation, or exploring Donne's possible influence in "The Cold Heaven," it is important to note that while its technique may be traced to the seventeenth century, its subject is modern. Indeed, the poem apparently arose from a deeply-felt personal experience, equivalent in intensity perhaps to the happier experiences which Yeats recorded in his early Autobiography:

> A sexual dream was very rare. . . . One night I heard a voice, while I lay on my back. . . . The room seemed to brighten and as I looked towards the foot of the bed I saw that it was changed into precious stones. . . .

> Another night I thought I was taken out of my body into a world of light, and while in this light, which was also complete happiness, I was told I would now be shown the passage of the soul at its incarnation. (Memoirs, 127, 127-28)

As one of several who comment, T. R. Henn makes the predictable suggestion that "The Cold Heaven" was occasioned by Maud Gonne's marriage to Major MacBride (LT, 93). It might be more accurate, however, to regard the poem as generally, rather than specifically, influenced by Yeats's relationship with Maud, as were so many of his early poems. A. N. Jeffares, it should be added, records that when Maud asked Yeats the meaning of "The Cold Heaven" she was told that "it was an attempt to describe the feelings aroused in him by the cold detached sky in winter. He felt he was alone, responsible in his loneliness for all the past mistakes that were torturing his peace of mind." Jeffares comments that "this was a momentary intensity of perception made more poignant for [Yeats] by the memory of his lost love" (Comm, 146). In summary, Yeats's own explanation and the observations of others firmly locate the subject of "The Cold Heaven" in Yeats's personal experience.

In the poem itself, however, Yeats has successfully transformed that experience into a public expression of passion which is indebted to the legends of romantic literature and the anonymous man of the roads, as well as the technical brilliance of the metaphysical poets of the late English Renaissance. Its narrative structure is determined by its imagery which may be traced to a statement in Discoveries:

> The lovers and fighters of old imaginative literature are more vivid experiences in the soul than anything that one's own ruling passion that is itself riddled by their own thoughts as by lightning, and even two dumb figures on the roads can call up all that glory. (E&I, 276)

"The Cold Heaven" is, as pointed out above, a dramatization of a 'vivid experience in the soul.' The general subject of the poem is the rule of passion and Yeats's persona in the poem is "riddled with light" by the agony of remembered passion, even as Yeats had earlier described "ruling passion . . . riddled by . . . thought as by lightning" in Discoveries. Further, in the final lines of "The Cold Heaven" memories of the past are gathered up into the image of a ghost "out naked on the roads," like the "two dumb figures on the roads" who can call up the glory of a past as passionate as that of the lovers and fighters of old literature. These relationships should not obscure the crucial difference between "The Cold Heaven" and Yeats's observations in Discoveries. That difference lies in the shaping of all the impulses behind the poem into a dramatization of personal torture which suspends the central question of responsibility through to the end of the poem, merging the immediacy of Yeats's personal dilemma with his impersonal observations in Discoveries:

> . . . Ah! when the ghost begins to quicken,
> Confusion of the death-bed over, is it sent
> Out naked on the roads, or as the books say, and stricken
> By the injustice of the skys for punishment?
> (CP, 140)

Joseph Hone was perhaps the first to suggest a comparison between "The Cold Heaven" and Donne's poetry when, in 1942, he pointed to Yeats's poem as a harbinger of later achievement, observing that Yeats "suddenly achieves that fury of self control, later proclaimed as a deliberate end, which aligns him with the turbulent Donne . . ." (W. B. Yeats, 302). But aside from the force with which powerful passions are communicated, "The Cold Heaven" has other characteristics which may be termed 'metaphysical'

and can be traced to Yeats's knowledge of Donne. Indeed, Henn, who considers the poem the first in which Yeats's debt to the metaphysicals is clearly defined, attributes that debt directly to Yeats's receipt of Grierson's edition of Donne (LT, 93).

The poem's language is spare, concrete and surprising, heightening the dramatic quality of the images. Henn points to the 'metaphysical' quality of the "ice-fire image" (LT, 94). Indeed, "ice burned" is an oxymoron which illustrates how Yeats used physical sensations to describe a metaphysical condition that is ephemeral, private and mysterious. In addition, while Hone detects an "adjectival economy" in "The Cold Heaven" and other contemporary poems (302), Henn points to "a new metre and a new rhythmical treatment, sinewy and economical and direct" (LT, 93). The persona addresses the reader directly and his tone is conversational and apparently personal: "Suddenly I saw the cold and rook-delighting heaven" (CP, 140). Thus, "The Cold Heaven" opens as so many of Donne's poems open, by thrusting the reader directly into the 'action' or dramatic situation of the poem, at the informal insistence of a persona who addresses his audience in the first person:

> I wonder by my troth . . . ("The Good-Morrow," I, 7);
>
> For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love . . .
> ("The Canonization," I, 14);
>
> Blasted with sighs, and surrounded with teares,
> Hither I come to seek the spring.
> ("Twicknam Garden," I, 28).

In each poem, including Yeats's, the language remains colloquial to the end, and the speaking voice is still heard, as the decorum established in

the opening drama is maintained.

Almost all commentators on "The Cold Heaven," which is among the most remarked upon of Yeats's poems, especially with respect to Yeats's relation to Donne, note that it is visionary. Hone places it "among the flower of Yeats's dream poetry in any period" (302), while Henn suggests that it marks the "return of vision" which Yeats had doubted during his "long preoccupation with affairs," speculating that it was the intensity of this vision which began to purify Yeats's verse. In fact, he calls it a mystical embodiment of experience and links it further to Yeats's interest in Donne by suggesting that "for a mystical instant [all is] apparent, and he himself, dying that death for love--perhaps a Donne-memory?--is a ghost" (LT, 94).

Zwerdling, too, includes "The Cold Heaven" in his discussion of Yeats's poems about his visionary experiences (Yeats and the Heroic Ideal, (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 159). Dealing with the poem in some detail, he suggests that it "illustrates how Yeats solves the problem of effectively describing something which is both private and supernatural" (161)--the problem which Yeats himself addressed in "The Tragic Generation." Zwerdling concludes that Yeats succeeded by including "precise pictures" of unfamiliar material, describing the emotion of the speaker, and suggesting the quality of the ecstatic state by ending the descriptive portion of the poem with an ambiguous phrase--"riddled with light"--that is, by concentrating less on the nature of the vision than on the heroism of the visionary.

Rajan is another who admires "The Cold Heaven," calling it "the most compelling and elusive poem" in Responsibilities (Critical Introduction, 76). Although he acknowledges the earlier admiration of both

Hone and Henn, he focuses upon the poem as a study of man in relation to the cosmos, which places man's dilemma in a cosmic context whose dimensions approach those of Donne's seventeenth-century context:

> Individual guilt leads into cosmic punishment. The man excessive in blaming himself is stricken by the injustice of the skies. At one level therefore a balance, or more precisely a correspondence, is preserved; but at another level the injustice done to the individual who accepts a responsibility which sense and reason forbid is frighteningly compounded by the injustice poured on him by a malignant universe. (76)

From a modern point of view, such a context is without the solace offered by the seventeenth century. At best the cosmos is inexplicable. At worst it acquires and magnifies fears and doubts which plague the modern psyche. Those who must write within such a context cannot offer any solutions and can only define their situation as they find it. Hence Rajan specifically locates the importance of "The Cold Heaven" in its dramatic qualities, observing that "its profound power flows from its immediacy. It is not argued but presented. . . . It is for the engaged mind of the reader to live the conclusion" (76-77).

Similarly, Ellmann observes that "we are swept into the poem and find [the poet's] reaction dramatically possible and meaningful for ourselves" (Man and Masks, 204). Indeed, it is in his relatively early consideration of "The Cold Heaven" in Man and Masks which appeared in 1948 that Ellmann points to the first appearance of the new technique mentioned above, a new use of the question which allowed Yeats to combine both doctrine and doubt and transcend both by directing attention away from the question to the emotional state of the speaker, even as Zwerdling was later to observe that he had directed attention away from the vision to the heroism of the visionary in "The Cold Heaven." More

specifically, Ellmann suggests that Yeats combined the techniques of drama and metaphor to create 'dramatic metaphors,' allowing him "to escape a large share of the responsibility for his fictions . . ., and at the same time to attain a more powerful mode of expression" (205).

Like others, Ellmann suggests that "The Cold Heaven" points the way to Yeats's later development. For him, that development is characterized by Yeats's perfection of his dramatic skills, including the dramatic metaphor, to explore aspects of his personality which otherwise might never have been revealed. Indeed, Ellmann suggests that Yeats's repudiation of embroideries for the greater "enterprise / In walking naked" in "A Coat" (CP, 142) was merely the adoption of a new artifice. "Nakedness," he observes, "had in itself become an artifice" and what remained to Yeats was a search "for a variety of dramatic situations in which to pretend to be naked" (205).

In "The Cold Heaven" Yeats communicated experience metaphorically, most powerfully through the concluding personification as a ghost out naked on the roads. Other poems contemporary with "The Cold Heaven" in which Yeats has also used a metaphor to make an abstraction, concrete, include: "Paudeen" (1913) [curlew cries], "The Witch" (1912), "The Peacock" (1914), "Fallen Majesty" (1912) [burning cloud], "Friends" (1911) [sweetness . . .], and "A Coat" (1912). With the exception of "Friends," the composition of all these poems either coincides with, or follows, Yeats's reading of Grierson's edition of Donne. Thus, it is not surprising that these and other poems of the period recall the work of Donne and other seventeenth-century English poets.

Many of Duncan's comments focus upon Yeats's use of metaphor and, in particular, the metaphysical techniques which he discerns in the poetry written after Yeats's study of Grierson. For example, he suggests that Yeats was indebted to Donne's contemporary, George Herbert, for "The Witch" and "The Peacock," adding that Yeats used metaphors in a similar fashion in "A Coat" and later poems like "The Hawk" (1916), "The Balloon of the Mind" (1917), "The Friends of His Youth" (1926), "Spilt Milk" (1930), and "The Spur" (1936). Similarly, Yeats's metaphorical scale of sickness in the relatively early "A Friend's Illness" (1909) anticipated later metaphors which are reminiscent of both Donne and Herbert. Compare Yeats's

> Why should I be dismayed
> Though flame has burned the whole
> World, as it were a coal,
> Now I have seen it weighed
> Against a soul
> (CP, 109)--

with lines from Herbert's "Vertue"--

> Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,
> Like season'd timber, never gives;
> But through the whole world turn to coal,
> Then chiefly lives.
> (Cited by Duncan, 136)

Meanwhile, noting that this particular conceit was familiar to seventeenth-century readers, William Carpenter also suggests an analogy with Donne's "A Feaver":

> O wrangling schooles, that search what fire
> Shall burn this world, had none the wit
> Unto this knowledge to aspire,
> That this her feaver might be it?
> . . . . . .
> For I had rather owner be
> Of thee one houre, than all else ever.
> (Cited by Carpenter, MP, 58)

In addition, Carpenter remarks that the poem as a whole has "the irregular, enjambed, colloquial rhythms of metaphysical poetry," accurately describing its effect with the suggestion that, like Donne, Yeats used the "intellectual play of the conceit" to achieve a distance from his subject "while still maintaining an emotional intensity through the use of cosmic analogy." For Carpenter, it was this ability which Yeats later recognized in Donne's writing when he commented to Grierson that "the more precise and learned the thought the greater the beauty, the passion," and saw in his own work when he wrote that his father would be "astonished at the change in my work, at its intricate passion" (Carpenter, 58. Cited from L, 570, 644).

Meanwhile, Duncan detects a similar figure in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" (1918) (136). Indeed, Yeats suggests that fire seems to consume "The entire combustible world in one small room" (CP, 151) in an image which recalls the lines from Herbert's "Vertue" and Donne's "A Feaver." Moreover, Yeats's borrowing acquires added significance in the light of the possibility that this image is the tragic side of Donne's elation in making "one little room an everywhere." In addition, Yeats's recollection of Maud in "Fallen Majesty" as a "burning cloud" may be compared with the "ice burned" of "The Cold Heaven." Both images force acceptance of a physical contradiction so that an emotional state seems to be intellectually perceived or 'felt.' In "That the Night Come," which is contemporary with "The Cold Heaven," time is bundled away, much as it is devoured in Marvell's "To his Coy Mistress" (ed. MacDonald, 21-22). Finally, Yeats's debt to his seventeenth-century predecessors is apparent in his late tribute to Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz, and Lissadell,

their version of Jonson's Penshurst:

> The innocent and the beautiful
> Have no enemy but time;
> Arise and bid me strike a match
> And strike another till time catch;
> Should the conflagration climb,
> Run till all the sages know.
> We the great gazebo built,
> They convicted us of guilt;
> Bid me strike a match and blow.
> (CP, 263-64)

Duncan also points to Yeats's development of what he terms 'extended metaphors' which link "the inner and outer, the abstract and concrete, and the various realms of being Yeats knew through his familiarity with correspondences" (139). In addition to the astrological image of "The Chosen" which will be considered presently in some detail, Duncan cites as examples, the "extended figure" in "Easter, 1916" (1916), "Hearts with one purpose alone / . . . / Enchanted to a stone / . . ." (CP, 204); the "extended conceit" of "High Talk" (1938) with its "ironic overtones," where the 'high-talk' of poetry is compared with the high-stilts worn in a circus parade; the similarly ironic recollection that the poet has put all his "circus animals" on show in "The Circus Animals' Desertion" (1937-38); and finally, the modification of the metaphysical conceit in "The Long-Legged Fly" (1937-38), where work of greatest significance, like that of Michelangelo, is compared to that of a fly (139-40).

But in addition to the refinement of his technical skills, the expansion of his subject matter in poems from Responsibilities onward, allowed Yeats to treat his material in a more complex and distinctly Donnean manner. For example, his fascination with what Duncan terms the

"body-soul dilemma" (141) resulted in several poems which may be traced directly back to Donne's "Extasie," each of which provided a test for Yeats's ingenuity and dramatic subtlety.

At the outset, however, it must be noted that "Adam's Curse" (1902), the first of Yeats's poems which seems to recall "The Extasie" preceded Responsibilities by several years. Indeed, its setting, "We sat together . . ." (CP, 88), and talk of love suggest that Yeats had read Donne's poem and begun to adapt it in his own work long before the appearance of the Grierson edition. None the less, the fact that Donne's poem is so much more vividly recalled in later poems, beginning with "A Memory of Youth" (1912), points to the impact of that edition.

Jeffares reports that "A Memory of Youth" was written in August 1912 (Comm, 143), a month before Yeats's letter to Grierson; thus, it was undoubtedly composed while Yeats was in the process of re-reading Donne. In fact, Joseph Duncan has already pointed to the influence of "The Extasie" in Yeats's poem, having suggested parallels in "setting, dramatic situation, mood, metrics and some of the phrasing" and compared Donne's

> We like sepulchrall statues lay;
> All day, the same our postures were,
> And wee said nothing all the day,

with Yeats's,

> We sat as silent as a stone,
> We knew, though she'd not said a word. . . .
> (Cited by Duncan, 134-35)

Further, in the second stanza, the speaker attempts to coax Love to return, with an argument which acknowledges the dual aspects of love which are the subject of Donne's "Extasie":

Believing every word I said,
I praised her body and her mind
Till pride had made her eyes grow bright,
And pleasure made her cheeks grow red,
And vanity her footfall light,
Yet we, for all that praise, could find
Nothing but darkness overhead.
(CP, 138)

Similarly, "The Extasie," as well as "A Memory of Youth" stands behind Yeats's later "Summer and Spring" from A Man Young and Old (1926-27) where the familiar setting is established once again and love is analysed in the manner of Donne's poem, with similar results:

We sat under an old thorn-tree
And talked away the night.
Told all that had been said or done
Since first we saw the light,
And when we talked of growing up
Knew that we'd halved a soul
And fell the one in t'other's arms
That we might make it whole.
(CP, 253)

Commenting on the conception of love analysed by the lovers of "Summer and Spring," Joseph Duncan remarks that like Donne, Yeats "evoked a kind of metaphysic of love that sought to make one both the individual lovers and the body and soul" (138). Citing Donne's treatment of that metaphysic in "The Extasie," "The Good-Morrow" and "The Sunne Rising," Duncan notes that Yeats also exploited a similar concenption of love in "Among School Children," "Solomon to Sheba," "Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgement" and "The Three Bushes" (138-39). In addition, Duncan's selections may also be used to illustrate Yeats's stylistic range since, in each, he has adapted Donne's metaphysic of love in a distinctly different way.

For example, in "Among School Children" (1926) Yeats's aim is the diminution of his own long-held and often lofty conception of himself and his ideals. To that end, he presents a re-interpretation of Plato in what Duncan terms "a homely figure" (138):

> . . . and it seemed our two natures blent
> Into a sphere from youthful symphony
> Or else, to alter Plato's parable
> Into the yolk and white of the one shell.
> (CP, 243)

In "Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgement" (1930), however, the matter is placed in an entirely different light, in keeping with her forthright personality:

> 'Love is all
> Unsatisfied
> That cannot take the whole
> Body and soul'
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 'What can be shown?
> What true love be?
> All could be known or shown
> If Time were but gone'.
> (CP, 292)

In "The Three Bushes" (1936) the dilemma is resolved through a complex relationship:

> He shall love my soul as though
> Body were not at all,
> He shall love your body
> Untroubled by the soul,
> Love cram love's two divisions
> Yet keep his substance whole.
> (CP, 344)

view, distinguished Yeats from his contemporaries in the pursuit of the 'Romantic Image' (RI, 67). Nor is it contrary to Yeats's response when Archibald McLeish called him a 'public' poet, that the word which he had not thought of before is a word he wants.

Yeats's tendency to echo the language of Grierson's remarks, without adopting their substance, is apparent in a fifth direct reference to Donne, from "The Tragic Generation," which ultimately pertains to the perception of metaphor in poetry:

> 'Literature now demands the . . . right of exploration of all that passes before the mind's eye, and merely because it passes.' Not a complete defence, for it substitutes a spiritual for a physical objectivity, but sufficient, it may be, for the moment, and to settle our place in the historical process.
>
> The critic might well reply that certain of my generation delighted in writing with an unscientific partiality for subjects long forbidden. Yet is it not most important to explore especially what has been long forbidden, and to do this not only 'with the highest moral purpose,' like the followers of Ibsen, but gaily, out of sheer mischief, or sheer delight in that play of the mind? Donne could be as metaphysical as he pleased, and yet never seemed unhuman and hysterical as Shelley often does, because he could be as physical as he pleased; and besides, who will thirst for the metaphysical, who have a parched tongue, if we cannot recover the Vision of Evil?
>
> I have felt in certain early works of my own which I have long abandoned, and here and there in the work of others of my generation, a slight, sentimental sensuality which is disagreeable, and does not exist in the work of Donne, let us say, because he, being permitted to say what he pleased, was never tempted to linger, or rather to pretend that we can linger, between spirit and sense. How often had I heard men of my time talk of the meeting of spirit and sense, yet there is no meeting but only change upon the instant, and it is by the perception of a change, like the sudden 'blacking out' of the lights of the stage, that passion creates its most violent sensation. (A, 325-26)

Although these remarks were written for The Trembling of the Veil, which was published in 1920-21, at least eight years after the appearance of Grierson's edition, the manner in which Yeats invoked Donne as an example confirms that the particular expression of Grierson's comments had left a lasting impression.

In each case, colloquialisms, tone and dramatic quality have been altered to suit both speaker and occasion.

Finally, the debate of "Solomon to Sheba" (1918) points to yet another variation of Donne's model. Anticipated by "A Memory of Youth" which reinforces the connection between later poems related to "Solomon to Sheba" and Donne's "Extasie," "Solomon to Sheba" is basically a description of a dialogue of lovers:

> All day long from mid-day
> We have talked in the one place,
> All day long from the shadowless noon.
> (CP, 155)

Even more than "A Memory of Youth," "Summer and Spring" and other poems considered above, "Solomon to Sheba" attests to Donne's general importance to Yeats. For example, Yeats's observations of the position of the sun and its shadows recall Donne's "A Lecture upon the Shadow." In both poems the shadows cast by the rising and setting sun are synonymous with blindness to the true nature of love, or imperfect love, while the mid-day sun which casts no shadow signifies clarity and true love. Just as Donne's Lecturer on love had concluded that

> Love is a growing, or full constant light;
> And his first minute, after noone, is night
> (I, 72),

so Sheba reminds Solomon,

> 'If you had broached a matter
> That might the learned please,
> You had before the sun had thrown
> Our shadows on the ground
> Discovered that my thoughts, not it,
> Are but a narrow pound.'
> (CP, 155)

However, the conclusion which Solomon wrests from his dialogue with Sheba in an attempt to claim her wisdom for his own distinguishes the playful drama of Yeats's poem from the more serious pedagogical stance of Donne's Lecturer and turns attention from "A Lecture upon the Shadow" to other poems by Donne. Solomon's conclusion, that

> There's not a thing but love can make
> The world a narrow pound,

recalls Donne's remark in "The Good-Morrow" that Love "makes one little roome, an every where" (I, 7), as well as the closing lines of "The Sunne Rising" where the sun is informed that the "world's contracted" so that "This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphere" (I, 12). Similarly, in "A Valediction: of weeping" the lover's tears become a world (I, 38) while in "A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day . . ." the lovers' tears "drownd the whole world" (I, 44) and finally in "The Canonization," the whole world's soul has been contracted and driven into the glasses of his lover's eyes (I, 15).

Yeats is similarly endebted to Donne in a second poem on the Solomon theme, "Solomon and the Witch," also written in 1918. There love is said to have "a spider's eye / To find out some appropriate pain," while in Donne's "Twicknam Garden," the lover brought "spider love, which . . . can convert Manna to gall," an echo noted by both Henn and Duncan (LT, 57; Revival, 134). In addition, Yeats appropriates the Biblical context which informs Donne's poem:

> And that this place may thoroughly be thought
> True Paradise, I have the serpent brought.
> (I, 28)

For his part, Yeats conflates all occasions of the loss and regaining of paradise and transfers the responsibility and guilt to his lovers. Yeats's equivalent of paradise is the point at which Choice and Chance are one, or when Unity of Being or Phase 15 is reached. Although attainment of that point is illusory in "Solomon and the Witch"--"'. . . the world stays'" (CP, 208)--the union of the two lovers still has cosmic implications which are suggested not only by analogies with philosophical and religious systems, that is, by analogies with a macrocosm, but also by the psychological delusion that the lovers become a microcosm of the world which those systems, including Yeats's Vision, explain:

> Maybe the bride-bed brings despair,
> For each an imagined image brings
> And finds a real image there;
> Yet the world ends when these two things,
> Though several, are a single light,
> When oil and wick are burned in one. . . .
> (CP, 199-200)

Thus it is possible to see here how Yeats appropriated Donne's techniques to cement the relationship between experience and A Vision which contains his theory of personality. Just as Donne's lovers create a world which has the characteristics of a Renaissance world, so Yeats's lovers create a world which reflects the philosophy which he devised to explain the modern world. Further, Yeats's remark that "the world ends" recalls the several points in Donne's poetry where the lovers create their own worlds which have already been cited in the discussion of "Solomon to Sheba." More specifically, the language of "Solomon and the Witch" recalls Donne's "Canonization":

> We'are Tapers too . . .
> And wee in us finds the'Eagle and the Dove.
> The Phoenix ridle hath more wit
> By us, we too being one, are it.
> So to one neutrall thing both sexes fit,
> Wee dye and rise the same, and prove
> Mysterious by this love
> . . . . . .
> You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage
> Who did the whole world's soule contract. . . .
> (14-15)

Finally, although the comparison must not be pursued too far, it is possible to suggest a parallel between Donne's Phoenix riddle and Yeats's point of union between Choice and Chance, inasmuch as both are intellectual, asexual explanations of the mysteries of love.

It may be noted in passing that both "Solomon to Sheba" and "Solomon and the Witch" were anticipated by "On Woman" (1914), a very early poem from The Wild Swans at Coole. Again, the combination of pedantry and passion which Yeats observed in Donne's work and reported in his letter to Grierson is recalled as the speaker insists that

> Though pedantry denies,
> It's plain the Bible means
> That Solomon grew wise
> While talking with his queens,
> . . . . . .
> (CP, 165)

Here too, Yeats's central image is Donnean in both its subject and the concentration of its presentation:

> When she the iron wrought, or
> When from the smithy fire
> It shuddered in the water:
> Harshness of their desire
> That made them stretch and yawn,
> Pleasure that comes with sleep,
> Shudder that makes them one.
> (CP, 165)

Finally, the dialogue of lovers in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" (1919) provides further evidence of Yeats's long-standing pre-occupation with the relationship between body and soul and his related interest in the thinking of the body. The assertion that ". . . your lover's wage / Is what your looking-glass can show" may be traced back through Yeats's career to "Adam's Curse" (CP, 88), "A Guitar Player" from Discoveries, and "To a Young Beauty" where he addresses one who "mirror[s] for a school" (CP, 157). As the dialogue in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" progresses, that assertion is developed into a full-blown exploration of the Unity of Being which Yeats sought.

With regard to that search, Daniel Harris has already observed that Yeats's ability to express his ideal progressed from his use of the term 'thinking of the body,' through 'unity of being' to 'profane perfection of mankind' (37). Indeed, the latter phrase, from "Under Ben Bulben" is perhaps Yeats's final expression of the unity of body and soul which he had prescribed for modern man in Discoveries. Further, the emphasis on sensuality and physicality implied in the phrase "profane perfection . . ." and the context in which it appears, confirms that although the task of bringing the soul of man to God was perhaps more physical than Yeats had first anticipated, his early remarks were vindicated in the conclusions outlined in the poem which he intended as his epitaph:

> Measurement began our might:
> Forms a stark Egyptian thought,
> Michael Angelo left a proof
> On the Sistine Chapel roof,
> Where but half-awakened Adam
> Can disturb globe-trotting Madam
> Till her bowels are in heat,
> Proof that there's a purpose set
> Before the secret working mind:
> Profane perfection of mankind.
> (CP, 399)

The fact that the presence of the ideal may be registered in the bowels of even the most thoughtless modern traveller indicates that Yeats had indeed managed to translate his intellectual ideal into physical terms, much as his adaptation of "body thought" had emphasized the physical, rather than spiritual component in Donne's phrase, although the drama which unfolds in the Sistine Chapel of his "Under Ben Bulben" represents an obscene debasement of his original concept. Yeats's "profane perfection" is an outrageous oxymoron which descends from earlier references to burning ice and clouds which yokes opposites in the manner of phrases, like 'sensuous cynicism,' which were used to describe Donne in the nineteenth century. Yeats's use of such a phrase in one of his very last poems confirms that the contradictions which the romantic commentators of the nineteenth century saw in Donne were at the root of Yeats's perception of Donne's relevance to the twentieth century.

Although Yeats had referred to Michelangelo's achievement in another late poem, "An Acre of Grass"--"A mind Michael Angelo knew . . ." (CP, 347)--the thought which finally emerged as his "profane perfection" was developed in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," written during a period when Yeats's interest in Donne was most evident in his work, both with respect to his nineteenth-century heritage from Donne criticism and his own investigations of Donne's poems after the appearance of the Grierson edition. In "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" Yeats's own aim as a poet in pursuit of an art of physicality whose truth could be felt, is described under the guise of a description of the work of Veronese and Michelangelo, in a passage which anticipates lines from "Under Ben Bulben":

Paul Veronese
And all his sacred company
Imagined bodies all their days
By the lagoon you love so much,
For proud, soft, ceremonious proof
That all must come to sight and touch;
While Michael Angelo's Sistine roof,
His 'Morning' and his 'Night' disclose
How sinew that has been pulled tight,
Or it may be loosened in repose,
Can rule by supernatural right
Yet be but sinew.
(CP, 198)

Pursuing the reasons why sinew rules "by supernatural right," Yeats approaches the relationship between the sacred and the profane, with a perplexing question:

Did God in portioning wine and bread
Give man His thought or His mere body?
(CP, 198)

The phrase "mere body" tips the balance in favour of the body. In fact it clinches the philosophical argument, as well as that of the lovers, and the focus of the poem returns to the opening situation:

. . . blest souls are not composite,
. . . all beautiful women may
Live in uncomposite blessedness,
And lead us to the like--if they
Will banish every thought, unless
The lineaments that please their view
When the long looking-glass is full,
Even from the foot-sole think it too.
(198)

Yet the point of the poem is that its end is not a return to its beginning, but that it has all been an exposition of the same subject, the relation of the body and soul, natural and supernatural, sacred and profane, all of which are opposing aspects of the same whole. Yeats's concept of the thinking of the body which derives from Donne's description of Elizabeth Drury is thus connected to his observations on the art of Michelangelo and the Renaissance in general. Moreover, Donne's importance to Yeats's progress towards the definition of his ideal is reinforced by the fact that those observations are introduced into his poetry through a dialogue of lovers which may be grouped with other poems in which he is obviously indebted to Donne.

Yeats's development with respect to his ability to express the unity he sought in terms of human relations has been remarked upon by Georgio Melchiori in his discussion of "The Chosen" (1926), a poem of importance to that development because of "the new emphasis on the sexual act as a symbol of achieved unity and of evasion from the whirling gyre of time into the sphere of timelessness" (Whole Mystery, 183). Indeed, just as it is possible to see a progression through "Adam's Curse," "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" to "Under Ben Bulben" in relation to Yeats's ability to express his ideal in terms of bodily perfection, so Melchiori sees a similar progression from "Wild Swans at Coole" to "The Chosen." He suggests that the moment of perfection which Yeats represented in the earlier poem simply by the peaceful gliding of the swans on the lake--

> Unwearied still, lover by lover,
> They paddle in the cold
> Companionable streams . . .
> (CP, 147)--

has been replaced by the violence of the act of love which precedes

> That stillness . . .
> Where his heart my heart did seem
> And both adrift on the miraculous stream.
> (CP, 311)

"The Chosen" is, of course, the poem to which Yeats refers in his 1926 letter to Grierson:

> I have been reading your Donne again . . . especially that intoxicating 'St Lucies Day' which I consider always an expression of passion and proof that he was the Countess of Bedford's lover. I have used the arrangement of the rhymes in the stanzas for a poem of my own, just finished. (L, 710)

Melchiori acknowledges this letter, and while pointing to Donne's importance to the composition of "The Chosen," relates that importance to Yeats's interest in the occult as well as his reading of Donne. Indeed, in a later remark Melchiori suggests that Yeats needed a poetic model because although he "tried to organize his thought in philosophical constructions, the impulse he needed to make poetry out of it was sensuous" (185)--hence the importance of the relationship which Melchiori establishes between the act of love and the philosophy of A Vision. Precedent for such a relationship between the intellectual and the sensual in poetry was, of course, provided in Donne's poetry. Indeed, Melchiori suggests that Donne's poems served as a catalyst in the composition of "The Chosen." And although he acknowledges a specific relationship between "The Chosen" and Donne's "Nocturnall," he also suggests that other poems by Donne might have been important to Yeats at that point, including The First Anniversary, "The Sunne Rising," "The Good-Morrow" and "Valediction: of weeping." In particular, he directs his remarks towards Yeats's ability to express

the ideas of his Vision in his poetry by translating them into sensuous experience. Thus, those remarks point to the importance of Donne's presence in Yeats's tradition, and specifically, to Yeats's use of Donne in the development of his ability to express his ideal in physical terms.

In an earlier study, F. A. C. Wilson traced the Platonic and neo-Platonic origins of "The Chosen" and accounted for Donne's importance to the poem somewhat differently, by suggesting that it was an 'answer' to Donne's poem:

> Yeats wrote ["The Chosen"] as a technical exercise and, as he tells us himself, as an experiment in the metre of Donne's 'Nocturnall Upon St. Lucie's Day.' There are in fact strong resemblances in imagery as in form--the 'Nocturnall' may have suggested to Yeats the idea of using zodiacal imagery--but we cannot take the works as complementary. Yeats's poem is in fact an answer to Donne's; one might almost say a refutation of what is after all one of the most pessimistic of his lyrics. . . . Yeats, it is clear, intended his poem to state the counter-truth to [Donne's] catalogue of love's privations. . . . (205-06)

Although Yeats's remarks in his letter to Grierson suggest that he benefitted from his knowledge of Donne's technique, Wilson has placed perhaps too much emphasis upon Yeats's poem as a technical 'exercise,' especially in view of Melchiori's later analysis. Indeed, that analysis of the relationship between "The Chosen" and Yeats's occult interest makes Wilson's observation that Donne's poem gave Yeats "the idea of using zodiacal imagery" introductory at best. However, Wilson's suggestion that Yeats's poem is an 'answer' to Donne's does have merit, even though his remarks do not fully account for Yeats's fascination with Donne's poem as an expression of passion, or make reference to subsequent uses of darkness and privation

in Yeats's poetry. Paradoxically, the expression of passion in "A Nocturnall" which Yeats admired so much is a description of extreme privation--". . . I am every dead thing" (I, 44). Thus, Melchiori's discovery of "a new emphasis upon the sexual act as a symbol of achieved unity" (Whole Mystery, 183) in "The Chosen" provides an indication of how Yeats's poem serves as an answer to Donne's "Nocturnall," since such unity is the polar opposite of privation, while Wilson's focus upon Donne's catalogue of privations points the way to echoes of Donne's poem elsewhere in Yeats's work.

Although Wilson does not pursue those echoes, others do, including Henn and Duncan (LT, 324; Revival, 134). Indeed, more than one of Yeats's later poems may be profitably examined in the light of his regard for Donne's "Nocturnall," especially as that regard is expressed in the letters of 1926 and 1937. For example, both Henn and Duncan have connected the privations of "A Nocturnall" with the final stanza of Yeats's "The Gyres" (1936-37) where echoes of Donne's poem are perhaps most clearly heard:

> Conduct and work grow coarse, and coarse the soul,
> What matter? Those that Rocky Face holds dear,
> Lovers of horses and of women, shall,
> From marble of a broken sepulchre,
> Or dark betwixt the polecat and the owl,
> Or any rich, dark nothing disinter
> The workman, noble and saint, and all things run
> On that unfashionable gyre again.
>
> (CP, 337)

Creation must now proceed from dark nothingness, even as the alchemy of love in "A Nocturnall" had produced

> A quintessence even from nothingnesse,
> From dull privations, and leane emptiness;
> He ruin'd mee, and I am re-begot
> Of absence, darknesse, death: things which are not.
> (I, 44)

But in contrast to "A Nocturnall," where the sun will not be renewed, Yeats's poem is sustained by the suggestion that the movement which led to nothingness will ultimately bring its opposite, the full, once again. Indeed, the fashionable gyre now passed was characterized by the "ancient lineaments" of the first stanza. These lineaments in turn recall other expressions of Yeats's ideal, including his definition of Unity of Being as a perfectly proportioned human body and his adaptation of Donne's description of Elizabeth Drury who was so "distinctly wrought" through an alchemical process exactly opposite to that described in "A Nocturnall." Moreover, Yeats had long associated the creative process with alchemy and as early as 1906 declared that because "all art is . . . an endeavour to condense as out of the flying vapour of the world an image of human perfection, . . . the labour of the alchemists, who were called artists in their day, is a befitting comparison for all deliberate change of style" (VE, 849). Thus it is not surprising that "A Nocturnall" particularly fascinated Yeats since its 'reverse alchemy' allowed him to describe the destructive process in the same terms as the creative process. Indeed, it provided a way of describing the movement towards he unfashionable gyre which characterized his own time, a period when there was a general retreat towards 'darkness,' analogous to the withdrawal of love in "A Nocturnall."

Similarly in "The Statues" (1938), 'plummet-measured lineaments,' associated with passion and the achievement of cultural and personal meaning, contrast with the "formless spawning" upon the "filthy modern tide." Again, these lineaments are inversely related to the negative expression of passion in Donne's "Nocturnall" since they received their character through the passion of lovers at midnight and may now be traced only in the "proper dark." Here, as in "The Gyres," potentiality is harboured in darkness and emptiness as Yeats once again transferred the expression of personal passion in Donne's poem to the movements of civilization:

> Empty eyeballs knew
> That knowledge increases unreality, that
> Mirror on mirror mirrored is all the show,
> When gong and conch declare the hour to bless
> Grimalkin crawls to Buddha's emptiness.
> (CP, 375)

But Donne's expression of passion in "A Nocturnall" also helped Yeats to express personal passion. Indubitably he and Maud were prototypes of the boys and girls whose passion gave character to Pythagorean proportions in the opening stanza. Stating that Maud Gonne's beauty is "clearly behind the ideal envisaged" in this poem, Rajan in fact cites a parallel passage from "The Stirring of the Bones" in which Yeats suggested that Maud's beauty might have provided ancient Greek artists with a living norm:

> her face, like the face of some Greek statue, showed little thought, her whole body seemed a master-work of long labouring thought, as though a Scopas had measured and calculated, consorted with Egyptian sages, and mathematicians out of Babylon, that he might outface even Artemisia's sepulchral image with a living norm. (Critical Introduction, 183; A, 364-65)

In addition, Rajan locates Yeats's several seated Buddhas, including that of "The Statues," within "the tradition of Phidias and of 'those Greek proportions which carry into plastic art the Pythagorean numbers, those forces which are divine because all there is empty and measured'" (184). Thus, for Yeats, personal passion, the creative process and divinity itself all spring from privation, making Yeats's encounter with the "quintessence" of nothingness in Donne's "Nocturnall" especially fruitful for him.

But if "calculation, number, measurement . . ." may be associated with Maud in "The Statues," that association is even clearer in "A Bronze Head" which, as Rajan points out, serves as Yeats's poetic farewell to Maud (180). There Yeats's passion for Maud is directly associated with nothingness. His relationship with her having run its course, he pictures her as a "great tomb-haunter" who

> . . . sweeps the distant sky
> . . . . . .
> And finds there nothing to make its terror less
> Hysterica passio of its own emptiness.
> (CP, 382)

This tomb-haunter is the last of the many forms which Maud assumes in Yeats's poetry; yet none, including it, has entirely captured her essence, or perhaps substance can never be totally captured. Perhaps, as Yeats suggests in what Duncan terms "a Donne-like dialectic" (138) it is composite:

> . . . who can tell
> Which of her forms has shown her substance right?
> Or maybe substance can be composite,
> Profound McTaggart thought so, and in a breath
> A mouthful held the extreme of life and death.
> (CP, 282)

In any case, as Rajan notes, all of those forms are now memorialized in the bronze head, the silent work of art produced by calculation, number and measurement which remains as a symbol of Yeats's attempts and may be for others the "cue for passion" which Kermode describes (RI, 56). For Yeats, at any rate, it serves as a cue for reminiscence about passion near the close of his life. Meanwhile, for Yeats, the power to cast substance into form seems to have dissipated, paradoxically even as he cast his memories of Maud into the potent figure of the tomb-haunter. A vast and terrifying nothingness remains into which the elusive forms of the past have retreated; yet from which such forms have been made and must be made again.

In some respects "Bronze Head" is more like Donne's "Nocturnall" than either "The Gyres" or "The Statues." In general terms, "Bronze Head" and "A Nocturnall" are about the retreat of love, a personal situation; yet each is characteristic of its time so that they differ in particulars and significance. Although Yeats wished to believe that Donne had actually had an affair with Lucy, Countess of Bedford, it is possible that Donne's poem was little more than a playful exercise, the result of a mere game between poet and patroness. Like his other love-poems, it may reveal Donne as lover as an actor, filling one more role in order to explore one more aspect of love, that most perplexing human emotion.

Donne's theatricity, which meant that he was variously canonized, discovered in bed, mourning over relics of his lady, or pursuing angels, helps to explain why he was so attractive and important to Yeats. But Yeats was no court poet, whatever his illusions about Coole. His role-playing had a serious aspect. It was, in fact, at the root of the personal philosophy which became his Vision--'active virtue . . . is . . . theatrical, consciously dramatic, the wearing of a mask . . .," as he wrote in Per Amica (M, 334). Moreover, there is no possibility that his love for Maud was a court conspiracy, or a mere challenge of convention. Maud was a crucial member of his world. From the beginning she was central to his being. By his own admission she stands behind his love-poems, and many others as well--"the best that I have done / Was done to make it plain" (CP, 101). Yeats's poems are the evidence of his stubborn attempts to make Maud understand. The cry that is heard so early in "Words" (1908) persists through to "A Bronze Head":

> . . . even at the starting-post, all sleek and new,
> I saw the wildness in her . . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . I had grown wild
> And wandered murmuring everywhere, "My child, my child!"
> (CP, 382-83)

But the seriousness of Yeats's treatment of his feelings for Maud in "A Bronze Head" ought not to obscure the levity which often combined

with such seriousness to produce the kind of intellectual play which also characterizes Donne's poetry. In a general description of Yeats's use of wit, Duncan suggests that Yeats especially resembled both Donne and Marvell "in using various witty devices with serious expression and also a kind of open-minded, all-encompassing approach to his material. This is," he continues, echoing Yeats's remarks in "The Tragic Generation," "not so much ambiguity as a free play of the mind, often a sophisticated intellectual play in the choice of words or imagery" (140-41). Yeats himself cited Donne's example after remarking that it is "most important" to explore all subjects, "gaily, out of sheer mischief, or sheer delight in . . . play of the mind" (A, 326). Indeed, it was quite probably the wit inherent in Donne's poetry and later in Yeats's itself, which prevented that "slight, sentimental sensuality" to which Yeats had objected; for it is, after all, the effects of wit which he describes in his observation of a "change upon the instant" in which it is perceived that "passion creates its most violent sensation" (A, 326).

There can be little doubt that Yeats's mind ranged freely over many subjects, or that he forged the most unlikely opposites into effective combinations, most obviously illustrated, perhaps, by his importation of Byzantium into rural Ireland. More particularly, his "Thought from Propertius," written before 1915 and thus not long after his reading of the Grierson edition, provides an early example of his violent yoking of opposites, not only in the hyperbole which links Maud Gonne to Propertius[21] and Pallas Athene, but also in the combination of

sacred and profane which characterizes his vision of Maud who might

> Have walked to the altar
> Through the holy images
> . . . . . .
> Or been fit spoil for a centaur
> Drunk with the unmixed wine.
> (CP, 172)

Much later in "Beautiful Lofty Things" (1937) Yeats employed a similar technique, describing O'Leary, J. B. Yeats, Standish O' Grady, Augusta Gregory and Maud Gonne--who is again identified with Pallas Athene "in that straight back and arrogant head"--as "All the Olympians; a thing never known again" (CP, 348).

What makes the example of "Thought from Propertius" most relevant here, however, is the nature of the opposites combined in it. The juxtaposition of the sacred and profane which is effected in the poem recalls Yeats's observation of Donne's "pedantry and his obscenity" in his letter to Grierson of 1912 (L, 570). Indeed, it is possible to suggest that Yeats's letter contained, in addition to a description of Donne and his work, a description of the poet Yeats himself wished to become as well as the poetry he wished to write.

Moreover, the precise reference in the final line to the "unmixed wine" on which the centaur has become drunk points to a similar subtlety in the distinctions of "All Souls' Night" where

> A ghost may come;
> For it is a ghost's right,
> His element is so fine
> Being sharpened by his death,
> To drink from the wine-breath
> While our gross palates drink from the whole wine.
> (CP, 256)

Yeats, in fact, conceived of distinctions as fine as those on which Donne's "Extasie" is based and seems to play with them here as Donne did, in as much as he appears to contradict his initial proposition that men "drink from the whole wine" by concluding that

> . . . names are nothing. What matter who it be,
> So that his elements have grown so fine
> The fume of muscatel
> Can give his palate ecstasy
> No living man can drink from the whole wine.
> (CP, 259)

Presumably Yeats wished to emphasize that wholeness was an ideal condition beyond ordinary human perception so that what seems a contradiction here, or a toying with the reader, is really a redefinition, a more sensitive definition, which recognizes that "wine-breath" is also part of "whole wine." Thus Yeats's distinctions help him to express the nature of a spiritual condition which paradoxically transcends and ignores the very obvious distinction between life and death.

Thomas Duncan suggests that "All Souls' Night" provides an example of the "astringent irony" which is a "more distinctly modern" characteristic of "the light free play of the intellect over serious problems and deeply felt experience [which] links Yeats with the tradition of metaphysical wit" (141). Certainly the atmosphere of the poem tends towards melodrama and the ghosts summoned up are treated with humour, even disrespect. For example, "the slight companionable ghost, / Wild with divinity" that appeared before Horton both has the power to light up "the whole / Immense miraculous house / The Bible promised us,"

and seems "a gold-fish swimming in a bowl" (CP, 257). Terming the comparison as "whimsical with a trace of irony," yet an "accurate description of the friend's belief" in which there is also an "element of magnificence," Cleanth Brooks suggests that through his exploitation of opposites Yeats "has found means of letting . . . two elements work together in his picture of the crystal sphere of the heavens holding one golden and magnified image, 'wild with divinity'" (30). In addition, Yeats minces no words in attempting a description of MacGregor Mathers, "half a lunatic, half knave," who, Yeats is certain, would refuse his invitation:

> . . . he'd object to the host,
> The glass because my glass;
> A ghost-lover he was
> And may have grown more arrogant being a ghost.
> (CP, 258)

Finally, Yeats's speculations on the ghosts of three very familiar figures are somewhat incongrously bracketed by his promise of "a marvellous thing to say" (CP, 256), of "mummy truths to tell / Whereat the living mock" (CP, 259), as well as his conclusion,

> Such thought, that in it bound
> I need no other thing,
> Wound in mind's wandering
> As mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound.
> (CP, 259)

Yeats appears to have been fascinated by the word 'mummy' which Donne uses most effectively at the conclusion of "Love's Alchemie":

> Hope not for minde in women; at their best
> Sweetnesse and wit, they'are but Mummy, possest.
> (I, 40)

Yeats, too, uses the word to exploit a contrast between life and death. That contrast is most apparent in the phrase, 'mummy wheat,' which according to Cecil Salkeld, Yeats "never forgot." Describing him during the composition of "On a Picture of a Black Centaur by Edmund Dulac" in 1926, Salkeld reports that Yeats was obsessed by that single phrase. (Cited by Jeffares, Comm, 298.) Itself an oxymoron, that phrase does, in fact, appear in the poem which Yeats was then writing:

> . . . yet I, being driven half insane
> Because of some green wing, gathered old mummy wheat
> In the mad abstract dark and ground it. . . .
> (CP, 242)[22]

Others, however, see stronger affinities with Donne's poetry in Yeats's "On a Picture of a Black Centaur by Edmund Dulac." For them, it provides a further illustration of Yeats's ability to combine opposites as well as his fascination with the relationship between the body and soul. Summarizing the poem, Duncan remarks that Yeats, "thinking of his imagination as a centaur lured into perilous territory, . . . made a punning reference to its 'horse-play'" (141). Brooks, on the other hand, offers a more complex analysis to support his argument for "the ultimate identity of metaphysical and symbolist poetry" (64). Noting that Edmund Wilson cites the poem as an "especially clear example of the influence of the French Symbolists upon Yeats," Brooks agrees, but also insists that "it may be taken also as an especially clear example of metaphysical poetry" (61). In contrast to Duncan and possibly, with more accuracy, Brooks suggests that "the centaur symbolizes . . . the animal side of man as opposed to the intellectual side" (61), and that "the 'horse play' [sic] is literally the play of the centaur--of the concrete, physical man"

(62). Pointing to the associations of horse-play with "boisterous, rowdy, mischievious activity" as well as the "classic and heroic" associations of the centaur, Brooks concludes that Yeats's centaur is a "fitting symbol for the physical." In addition, he notes that the fact that the phrase has "two different significances" and "means them simultaneously . . . prepares for the fusion of the two apparently opposed meanings into the larger and richer meaning. The device," he concludes, "amounts to a serious pun such as occurs in Donne or Shakespeare" (62).[23]

Other metaphors, some already considered earlier in this study, are in need of--or have received--less interpretive analysis. In particular, several illustrate how Yeats combined opposites to ridicule and often deflate, his own image as a poet. For example in "High-Talk" (1937-38) he likens himself to a circus performer whose high stilts--or 'high-talk'--help him to confront reality:

> Malachi Stilt-Jack am I . . .
> . . . . . .
> All metaphor, Malachi, stilts and all. . . .
> . . . . . .
> I, through the terrible novelty of light, stalk on,
> stalk on;
> Those great sea-horses bare their teeth and laugh
> at the dawn.
> (CP, 386)

Yeats returned to the same theme some weeks later in "The Circus Animals' Desertion" (1937-38) where he describes himself as a showman in a circus:

> Winter and summer till old age began
> My circus animals were all on show,
> Those stilted boys, that burnished chariot,
> Lion and woman and the Lord knows what.
> (CP, 391)

Yeats confessed to his need for the creations of his imagination as early as "The Tower" (1925) where he dismisses all, except Hanrahan--"leave Hanrahan, / For I need his mighty memories" (CP, 222). That need is more poignantly revealed in the thoughts of the "sixty year old smiling public man" of "Among School Children" (1926), written a few months later. That figure, "a comfortable kind of scarecrow" (CP, 243) is not unrelated to the "aged man . . . but a paltry thing, / A tattered coat upon a stick" (CP, 217) of the contemporary poem, "Sailing to Byzantium" (1926). In "Among School Children," however, the speaker is not so much concerned with the transformation of his own soul into the "artifice of eternity" as with what has happened to the ideals he had hoped to realise in this lifetime. For example, his high-sounding metaphysic of love, a direct descendant of Plato's, has been reduced to a parable about the yolk and the white of an egg. The once dreamed of Ledean body is now pictured "bent / Above a sinking fire . . ." (CP, 243), while the thoughts of the great philosophers--Plato, Aristotle and Pythagoras--now seem no more than "old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird" (CP, 244). Finally, as a mocker of his own enterprise, Yeats points to his own privation of the body in quest of the truths of the soul, his despair of beauty and the inelegance of his "blear-eyed" quest for wisdom (CP, 244-45).

As noted by others, including Martz, Leishman and Le Comte, Yeats's desire to dramatize himself, often in mockery and scorn, was undoubtedly one of the reasons why he was attracted to Donne, since Donne's poetry and prose is also marked by conscious self-examination, often with a skeptical eye. Although for Yeats that desire was particularly associated with his theory of the mask, it was more generally the manifestation of an attitude

to life and death which Donne also shared.

For each, life was to be mocked, enjoyed, tried on and experimented with in its richest variety, and each of the masks which it offered had the added advantage of providing a new opportunity to discover the self or, in Ellmann's terms, "walk naked." Equally, death was to be defied. Just as Donne had proclaimed that death "shalt die" (I, 326), so Yeats declared his mastery over it with his irreverent and over-colloquial assertion that

> Death and life were not
> Till man made up the whole,
> Made lock, stock and barrel
> Out of his bitter soul
> ("The Tower," CP, 223),

and later, with his haughty insistence that

> A great man in his pride
> Confronting murderous men
> Casts derision upon
> Supercession of breath;
> He knows death to the bone--
> Man has created death.
> ("Death," CP, 264)

In spite of the colloquialism of the first passage and the pun in the penultimate line of the second--both undoubtedly inspired by Donne's example--Desai finds that the second at least ends with "an assertion even more dauntless" than Donne's in "Death Be Not Proud" (Yeats's Shakespeare, 119).

Indeed, that dauntlessness prevails in Yeats's response to death. Desai discerns it, for instance, in Yeats's reaction to both the "stoical calm" of Synge and the "gay insouciance" of Mabel Beardsley in their final days, the latter celebrated in "Upon a Dying Lady" (119). According to

Jeffares (Comm, 191-92) "Upon a Dying Lady" was written between 1912 and 1914, most of it after Yeats's reading of Grierson's edition in 1912. As noted above, its language echoes that of Yeats's letter to Grierson, confirming that Yeats was attempting to capture in his poem something of the Renaissance attitude to life and death which he had discovered, and may even have sought, in his reading of Donne. Finally, Carpenter points to the "aristocratic contempt" for death which Yeats revealed in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory":

> I am accustomed to their lack of breath,
> But not that my dear friend's dear son,
> Our Sidney and our perfect man,
> Could share in that discourtesy of death.
> (dissertation, 236; CP, 150)

Both poets regarded death as their own final mask. Undoubtedly Yeats had read of Donne's deliberate preparations for death, perhaps even in Grierson's notes (II, 248-49), and quite possibly looked upon them as a model for his own life and work in his final months. For example, when he described the old man of Tara preparing for his death in his very late poem, "In Tara's Halls" (1938), Yeats may well have had Walton's account of Donne's death in mind. Compare Yeats's lines with that early account as cited by Grierson:

> He bade, his hundred and first year at end,
> Diggers and carpenters make grave and coffin;
> Saw that the grave was deep, the coffin sound,
> Summoned the generations of his house,
> Lay in the coffin, stopped his breath and died
> (CP, 374);

'Being speechlesse, he did (as Saint Stephen) look steadfastly towards heaven, till he saw the Sonne of God standing at the right hand of his Father; And being satisfied with this blessed sight, (as his soule descended, and his last breath departed from him) he closed his owne eyes, and then disposed his hands and body into such a posture, as required no alteration by those who came to shroud him.' (II, 248)

Similarly, Yeats wrote an epitaph and left instructions that it should be carved on his tomb:

> Cast a cold eye
> On life, on death.
> Horseman, pass by
> (L, 914),

just as Donne had left an epitaph and prepared his tomb. Again, Grierson has cited Walton's description:

'Upon this urn he thus stood, with his eyes shut, and with so much of the sheet turned aside, as might show his lean, pale, and deathlike face, which was purposely turned towards the east, from whence he expected the second coming of his and our Saviour Jesus.' (II, 249)

Thus Yeats was just as defiant in the face of his own death as Mabel Beardsley and Synge had been in theirs. Indeed, like Donne and the man of Tara who seemed to control the time and place of his own death, Yeats was determined to orchestrate his own end.

In addition, Yeats's preoccupation with his death is apparent in his final poems, "Cuchulain Comforted" (13 January 1939), where he thrust himself into an otherworldly role:

> A man that had six mortal wounds, a man
> Violent and famous, strode among the dead;
> Eyes stared out of the branches and were gone.
>
> Then certain Shrouds that muttered head to head
> Came and were gone. . . .
> ("Cuchulain Comforted," CP, 395);

and "The Black Tower" (21 January 1939), where the refrain, "There in the tomb . . ." (CP, 396-97), carries the poem beyond the grave, blurring the distinction between this world and the next. Unlike "Under Ben Bulben" (4 September 1938), these poems do not mark the culmination of a lifetime. Rather, more like the "Hymn to God my God, in my sicknesse" where Donne anticipates the peace and joys of heaven, they are explorations of a new condition. However, while Donne's poem is marked by the same witty intellectual play that characterized his lyrics--"Whilst my Physitians by their lore are growne / Cosmographers, and I their Mapp . . ." (I, 368)--and other late poems on the same theme--"When thou hast done, thou hast not done, / For, I have more" ("A Hymn to God the Father," I, 369)--Yeats's approach to the new condition where men are half changed to birds is sombre, even eerie. Similarly, while Donne expresses a comfortable familiarity with what is to come--"Since I am comming to that Holy roome, / . . . / . . . As I come / I tune the instrument at the dore" (I, 368), Yeats projects worlds of forbidding strangeness, not only in "Cuchulain Comforted," but also in "The Black Tower":

> There in the tomb the dark grows blacker,
> The wind comes up from the Shore:
> They shake when the winds roar,
> Old bones upon the mountains shake.
> (CP, 397)

Although its date of composition is now the subject of some dispute, Yeats would have read in Grierson's notes that the "Hymn to God my God, in my sicknesse" was written just eight days before Donne's death (II, 248),[24] so that he might have been aware of yet another parallel with his own poems, the last written just seven days before he died 28 January 1939. Yet it is

not really necessary to prove that Yeats was conscious of Donne's model in these final poems. In fact, it is sufficient to note that both his conduct and the general theme of his last work confirm that he shared Donne's attitude to death.

Meanwhile, both poets had spent their lives experimenting with many masks and their experiments are reflected in their work, both in the poses they adopted and in the aspects of themselves which those poses allowed them to reveal. With respect to the latter, the dialogue poem was of special significance as a means of presenting communication, usually conflict, between aspects of the individual. For example, dialogues between the Soul and Body were commonplace in the Renaissance. They have been represented here by Marvell's "A Dialogue Between Soul and Body" and Yeats's "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," although the exchange between Hic and Ille in "Ego Dominus Tuus" (1915) may also be cited as a modern modification of the form. Donne's lyrics, however, offer examples of more complex variations in their dramatizations of the conflict between aspects of the self. Donne's "The Blossome," for instance, serves as a suitable example of the type of poem which served as a model for Yeats's debate with his heart in "Owen Aherne and his Dancers" (1917), another poem of that period between 1912 and 1921 when Donne's influence is most apparent in Yeats's work.

However, in addition to such dialogues, Yeats also revealed aspects of himself through the adoption of poses which allowed him to dramatize the seeming contradictions in his own personality, including those which manifest themselves in his early response to the dancer in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" (1919). In later years this tendency which is apparent in the two series, A Woman Old and Young (1926-29) and A Man Old

and Young (1926-27), resulted in the creation of Crazy Jane and Ribh, both of whom attest to the accuracy of Melchiori's observation that Yeats needed a sensuous impulse to make poetry out of his system (Whole Mystery, 53) which may be paraphrased in the suggestion that Yeats needed sensuous and passionate human intercourse to dramatize his ideal.

Crazy Jane, whose personality is more than superficially Donnean, is, in many respects, the dancer's opposite. While the dancer serves as an image of the thinking of the body and the union of opposites inherent in the view of Donne fostered by nineteenth-century Romantics, Crazy Jane represents another kind of wholeness, the wholeness of experience, as opposed to that of an ideal being. As Rajan remarks,

> . . . Crazy Jane represents the conviction that truth can only be possessed in time and that to live the truth man must consent to live it whole. The validity of experience resides in its completeness and one can only mutilate that completeness by forcing it into the categories of either body or spirit. Again and again Jane expresses the sense of wholeness, the recognition that opposites need each other to complete themselves, a recognition consummated in the act of love, which remains the stubborn centre of her wisdom. (Critical Introduction, 149).

In general, Crazy Jane's poems bear out the importance of Yeats's Renaissance masters, including Donne, who in addition to providing a tradition for expressing the whole as a relationship between body and soul, more specifically provided a linguistic tradition which is evident in both diction and imagery. Jane's language, which may be traced to the metaphysicals, especially Donne, easily accommodates the opposites which her truths embrace. Indeed, it is her language which largely makes the communication of the wholeness of her vision possible. For example, the language of commerce reminiscent of Shakespeare's in his thirtieth sonnet, ". . . / The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan, / Which I new pay as if not paid

before / . . .," sustains Yeats's metaphor in "His Confidence," "Undying love to buy / . . . / What payment were enough / . . ." (CP, 298). In "Her Anxiety" the association between love and death--"Every touch they give, / Love is nearer death" (CP, 297-98)--is a repetition of a commonplace Renaissance association which appears often in Donne's poetry. Yeats's fascination with hair, a skein and spindle in "Her Dream" (CP, 299), "Crazy Jane and Jack the Journeyman" (CP, 292-93), and "His Bargain" (CP, 299) recalls Donne's references to hair and his mistress' death in "The Funerall" and "The Relique" (see Duncan, Revival, 135). In "His Bargain" Yeats's spindle is also related to Platonism and his own Vision, and so provides him with a philosophical metaphor to explain the common experience of "Dan and Jerry Lout." In "Her Dream" the association of the lock of hair with "Berenice's burning hair" elevates the dreamer's feelings into the realm of romantic love, functioning in the same manner as an earlier reference to "Berenice's Hair" in "Veronica's Napkin" (1929). In "Crazy Jane and Jack the Journeyman" the skein is more closely associated with Yeats's other uses of the word in connection with his own philosophy. Here again, a separation between lover's souls and bodies is contemplated as in Donne's "Extasie." Here, as in "The Cold Heaven," life after death is projected through 'dramatic metaphor' as a ghostly dramatization:

> . . . . . .
> The skein so bound us ghost to ghost
> When he turned his head
> Passing on the road that night,
> Mine must walk when dead.
> (CP, 293)

In Crazy Jane, Yeats created a figure whose sense of wholeness emerged from an unwavering confrontation with experience. In Ribh, the hermit of Supernatural Songs and imaginary critic of St. Patrick, Yeats created another who also sought a fundamental unity. In Rajan's view, Ribh complements Crazy Jane, "representing the sexuality of the spirit rather than the spirituality of sex" (Critical Introduction, 152-53). Although one may agree with Rajan that "the poetry of 'spasm,'" that is Supernatural Songs, is "not successful as a means of insight into the higher reality" (154), it is possible to see Yeats reaching out in those poems, beyond conventional limits, for a new definition of truth.

As a somewhat unorthodox Christian, Ribh is not bound by doctrinal limitations. Indeed, in "Meru," his final poem, he asserts that all civilization is hooped together by "manifold illusion." What man really seeks is "the desolation of reality." Thus, thought is not constructive, but destructive:

> . . . man's life is thought,
> And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
> Ravening through century after century,
> Ravening, raging, and uprooting that he may come
> Into the desolation of reality.
>
> (CP, 333)

Egypt, Greece and Rome cannot lead him to that reality. Rather, it is nearest for hermits, naked and exposed to the elements on a mountain, who know "That day brings round the night, that before dawn / His glory and his monuments are gone" (CP, 334). That is, all that celebrates man's achievements will ultimately be consumed in darkness. Here, then, is the dark which Donne's "Nocturnall" helped Yeats to express again in Last Poems--

especially "The Gyres," "The Statues" and "A Bronze Head." Here too, Yeats finally seems to have discovered an image for his nakedness.

As in Crazy Jane's poems from Words for Music Perhaps, there are several echoes of Donne in Supernatural Songs. Most obvious is the comparison which Henn draws between "Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn" and "The Extasie" (LT, 348). The transfiguration of the lovers to pure substance and the description of their union--

> . . . when such bodies join
> There is no touching here, nor touching there,
> Nor straining joy, but whole is joined to whole;
> For the intercourse of angels is a light
> Where for its moment both seem lost, consumed
> (CP, 328)--

is reminiscent of several of Donne's poems including "Aire and Angels" and "The Extasie." In addition, the celebration of the anniversary of the lovers' deaths which follows in the second stanza recalls Donne's poems on the anniversary of Elizabeth Drury's death, as Henn has already pointed out (LT, 70), although Yeats himself seems to have also recalled another tale of a monk "reading his breviary at midnight upon the tomb of long-dead lovers on the anniversary of their death" (Letter to Olivia Shakespear, 24 July 1934, cited by Jeffares, Comm, 425).

In Supernatural Songs wholeness is a condition achieved only after darkness, found only after loss, attainable only after tragedy, and only available to the natural in the company of the supernatural. Indeed, in these songs apprehension of the supernatural is possible only if it takes on the character of the natural--as opposed to Crazy Jane's premise that the natural takes on supernatural characteristics--sloughing off the

characteristics which man has given it with his thought. That is, the natural sloughs off the meaning which has been conferred by Christianity and civilization in general. Thus, there is a new version of the trinity in "Ribh denounces Patrick," an announcement that Godhead is begotten in sexual spasm in "Ribh in Extasy" and devotion to hatred in "Ribh considers Christian Love Insufficient."

In the latter, Ribh comes upon a paradox which leads him to conclusions which he shares with seventeenth-century divines. Indeed, in its exploration of paradox and human sinfulness "Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient" may be compared with Donne's Holy Sonets. Ribh concludes that "Hatred of God may bring the soul to God" and submits to God's domination in the final stanza:

> What can she take until her Master give!
> Where can she look until He make the show!
> What can she know until He bid her know!
> How can she live till in her blood He live!
> (CP, 330)

Similarly, "The Four Ages of Man" is a poem in a Renaissance manner, reminiscent of Herbert in its simplicity. It is based upon ideas commonplace in the Renaissance: the four ages of man which correspond to the four elements (see Yeats's scheme in L, 823-25; also cited by Jeffares, Comm, 431-32). Again, the supernatural is the victor: "God shall win."

Thus, Ribh continues his struggle to assert the power of supernatural forces unencumbered by the illusory thoughts which man uses to explain reality. Ribh's struggle here is reminiscent of Yeats's defiance of death in "The Tower." Yet in the end, man's thought is the only tool he has to lead him to reality. As the echoes of Donne and Renaissance tradition in

Ribh's poems show, the paradox of Yeats's poetry is that at those points where he is most anxious to pierce through the fabrications of civilization to the core of reality, he is most dependent upon the fullest expression of that civilization. The Renaissance is necessary as the greatest truth without which the counter-truth of the modern period can never be revealed. It is the great anti-mask without which the mask of the modern could not be defined.

The masks of age which persist right up to Yeats's death complete a pattern begun early in his career. Indeed, the bases of Yeats's use of such masks were perhaps most clearly established in the prose of the years 1900-10 where it is clear that Yeats regarded the arts as arts of personality, and style as the shaping of that personality, the deliberate creation of a mask. In Yeats's view, personality was the form which ordered and directed passion and was thus analogous to a mask or pose. Indeed, Yeats was particularly interested in the word 'pose' and wrote that he appreciated personality in poetry much as he appreciated the physical pose of a statue, as an artistic form to contain the energy of life.[25]

Donne was especially important to Yeats's use of the dramatic pose as a means of exploring personality in poetry, largely because it was possible for Yeats to detect a similar use of such poses in his poetry, but also because his work illustrates how poetic techniques may be used to capture the energy of life. But because Yeats's theory of personality coalesced around his theory of the mask and involves the relation between self and anti-self which is the pre-occupation of much of Yeats's Vision, Yeats's use of the dramatic pose is more than experimentation with a literary

device. It is the poetic exploration of a whole theory of personality, so that Yeats's development of increasingly sophisticated dramatic skills serves as an indication of his growing insight into the complexities of human personality.

Ultimately, Yeats's encounter with Donne showed him how the passionate artifice of the Renaissance could be employed in his poetic re-creation of life. Finally, all that he said about Donne in his early letter to Grierson may in some measure be applied to Yeats himself, his observation that "the more precise and learned the thought the greater the beauty, the passion; the intricacy and subtleties of his imagination are the length and the depths of the furrow made by his passion. His pedantry and his obscenity--"the rock and the loam of his Eden . . ." (L, 570). Although Yeats was less precise and less interested in intricacies, he was perhaps more consciously in search of beauty and passion. At the same time, he was undoubtedly more aware of the opposition of pedantry and obscenity, while the dancer and Crazy Jane stand as the rock and the loam of his Eden. Yeats's response to Donne, then, was not only modified by his creative needs, it was the product of those needs, not only in 1912, but throughout his career. Indeed, as Yeats matured and developed as a poet, Donne's example and the stylistic model which he offered played a major role in his ongoing attempt to capture the energy of life in his work.

PART C: Yeats and Milton

I had put Shakespeare among the old
writers and Milton with the new.

Letter to J. B. Yeats,
24 November [1910]

He has found after the manner of his kind,
Mere images; chosen this place to live in
Because, it may be, of the candle-light
From the far tower where Milton's Platonist
Sat late. . . .

"The Phases of the Moon," 1918

CHAPTER I

Introductory

1. Survey of Criticism

Although Yeats is one of the few poets whose achievement may be compared with Milton's, in terms of the scope and nature of his ambition as well as the genres he employed, his name has rarely been seriously linked with Milton's. Passing reference is made to Milton in several studies, but few commentators point to a significant relationship between the two poets. Those who make more substantial observations have not attempted to incorporate them into a more comprehensive analysis of what is, potentially, the most fruitful of all of Yeats's relationships with an individual Renaissance poet.

To date, the only study solely devoted to that relationship is Leonard Unger's "Yeats and Milton" (The South Atlantic Quarterly, LXI (Spring 1962), 197-212). Although Unger is primarily concerned with the value of Milton's prose to Yeats's poetry and prose, he also wonders whether there is not "in Yeats's mature poetry a stylized yet supple and vigorous quality which may owe something to Milton." He suggests that that "something would be general and pervasive" even though "an approach to specific illustration can be made by noting that the blank verse of The Second Coming has that elevated tone, that energetic rhythm, that oratorical sweep and swell and emphasis which are the familiar qualities of Paradise Lost--especially of the first two books where Satan is so

brilliantly presented" (210). In addition to stylistic similarities, Unger also points to thematic parallels, suggesting that Milton and Yeats share 'mystiques' of art and nationality. He considers that Milton's "mystique of the nation" culminated in prophetic statement in Areopagitica in a passage, "Methinks I see . . . a noble and puissant nation . . .," which served as the source for Yeats's prophetic poem, "The Second Coming," in a manner that is indicative of Milton's general value to Yeats.

Unger's study, then, confirms the existence of a pervasive relationship between Yeats and Milton and does much to counter his own observation that "there is little obvious evidence in Yeats's writing" to generate concern with possible relations between the two poets (197). His is a valuable introduction since further investigation has in fact revealed that Yeats made a surprisingly large number of references to Milton and, as will be seen presently, certainly enough to warrant a more comprehensive study of the type which Unger has already provided.

Among Yeats commentators who make substantial observations, only Rupin Desai in Yeats's Shakespeare and Daniel Harris in Yeats: Coole Park and Ballylee refer to several points of contact. Most frequently, attention is called to Yeats's references to the "far tower" of "Milton's Platonist" and "Il Penseroso's tower" in "Phases of the Moon" and "My House." Milton's contribution to Yeats's sense of the symbolic significance of the tower is considered by Harold Bloom, Denis Donoghue, Daniel Harris, Thomas Henn, Norman Jeffares, Graham Martin, Thomas Whitaker and Marion Witt.[1] Less often, Yeats's poems for Robert Gregory, "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" and "Shepherd and Goatherd" are compared with Milton's Lycidas,

as in studies by Bloom, Harris, Frank Kermode, Robert Snukal, A. G. Stock and Marion Witt.[2] Meanwhile, Milton's stylistic influence upon Yeats is pointed out by Hone, and by Ellmann and Jeffares, the latter two citing the 1913 letter to Lady Gregory where Yeats remarks that he has at last "got Milton off [his] back."[3]

Most observations of similarity between Yeats and Milton are brief and, considered together, encompass a broad range of miscellaneous matters. For example, Yeats's late wish for an audience like that which attended the first performance of Milton's Comus is noted by Henn (LT, 275) and Kermode ("Players and a Painted Stage," in Integrity, 51), while Milton's angelology is detected behind "the intercourse of angels" in "Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn" by Henn (LT, 105), Rajan (A Critical Introduction, 154), and Bloom (408-09). Rajan also suggests that Milton's "Lycidas" might be among Yeats's sources for the dolphins of "Byzantium" (Critical Introduction, 144). Henn considers Yeats's mention of "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" in A Vision (LT, 208), while the importance of that particular poem to Yeats's "News for the Delphic Oracle" is noted in passing by Unger (209, n. 1) and considered in more detail by Daniel Albright (Myth Against Myth (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 121-24).

In an essay included in An Honoured Guest, Northrop Frye makes reference to a parallel between A Vision and De Doctrina ("The Rising Moon: A Study of A Vision," 9, 12 and 14), while in other essays from Donoghue's collection, John Holloway finds a Miltonic echo in a 1921 letter to Olivia Shakespear where Yeats describes "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" as "not philosophical but simple and passionate" ("Style and World in

'The Tower,'" 90; see also L, 668), and, Ian Fletcher sees Milton as "the Raphael of traditional morality" in The Trembling of the Veil ("Rhythm and Pattern in Autobiographies," 180).

Meanwhile, in Coole Park and Ballylee, Harris hears Miltonic echoes in "I Walked among the Seven Woods of Coole," the Introductory Poem to The Shadowy Waters (15); suggests a parallel between Paradise Lost and Reveries over Childhood and Youth, seeing both as myths of dispossession (88-89); and profitably glosses "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" with passages from Paradise Lost (119). In addition, in his exploration of the meaning of tragedy in Yeats's work, B. L. Reid remarks upon the progression beyond "Milton's 'calm of mind'" to "an excitement, an actual vicarious triumph, a sense of liberation and power . . ." which accompanies an encounter with Yeats's rendering of tragic experience (The Lyric of Tragedy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 24). Finally, more general remarks are made by Torchiana and Stallworthy in their Introductions to Yeats and Georgian Ireland (xiii) and Vision and Revision in Yeats's 'Last Poems' (12) respectively.

Milton specialists, Unger excepted, concern themselves even less with the relationship between Yeats and Milton. Of those surveyed, barely a dozen--including R. M. Adams, D. S. Berkeley, Leslie Brisman, Brooks and Hardy, Patrick Murray, B. Rajan, M. M. Ross, Leland Ryken, Arnold Stein, W. C. B. Watkins and Joseph Anthony Wittreich--mention a connection with Yeats.[4] Most of their references are brief and designed to illustrate other matters. Many more, however, concern themselves with Milton's dislodgement at the hands of Pound and Eliot and their followers but none,

with the possible exception of Kermode, have given special consideration to Yeats's position.[5]

Failure to examine that position and the relationship between Yeats and Milton, in general, amounts to a most unfortunate omission. A survey of Yeats's more than fifty direct references to Milton and his works reveals that he alone, of all the major figures of his time, sustained an appreciation of Milton with regard both to his style and ideas, from the late nineteenth century through to the late nineteen-thirties.[6] Moreover, as a "practitioner in the field of literary criticism," to use Eliot's terminology, Yeats was qualified, even in the eyes of Milton's detractors, to assess the value of Milton to modern poets.[7] Indeed, his appreciation of Milton was constantly tested by his experience as a working poet attempting to express himself as a poet of the twentieth century. The result of Yeats's test, however, was not rejection, but a measured acceptance of Milton's value which anticipated subsequent revaluations of his importance.[8]

That is not to suggest, however, that Yeats's attitude to Milton was wholly positive. Very early, he detected many of the same 'faults' which were later to cause rejection by Pound and Eliot. In addition, he was not totally immune to contemporary trends. During his years of close acquaintance with Pound he even seemed to adopt something of the attitude of Pound and Eliot to Milton's style--"I have at last got Milton off my back," "am rid of Miltonic generalizations"--yet his remarks at that time, which were also echoed many years later, must not be taken as a wholesale condemnation of Milton's style, but merely as a recognition that certain aspects of that style, especially as it had been transmitted through subsequent poets,

were inappropriate to his twentieth-century aims. Certainly those remarks do not invalidate the appreciation of Milton's style which is apparent in other comments, especially those made in 1902 and 1910-11.

Moreover, although Yeats might have regretted the significance of Milton's place in history, he never underestimated his ability as a thinker.[9] He gives no indication of ever having been tempted to join with those who considered Milton's work a monument to dead ideas. On the contrary, in some of his earliest remarks, he identifies Milton as a model for literary contemporaries and countrymen alike. Indeed, his own position became more and more analogous to Milton's as he, too, combined nationalism and literature and, like Milton, created his own philosophical system. The nature and function of that system, as well as more direct comments made later in his career, all suggest that Yeats respected Milton as a thinker and recognized how he had used his ideas in his work. Finally, the fact that the historical position to which Milton is assigned in A Vision had its origins in Yeats's thoughts for his essay on Spenser in 1902 and was first tentatively described on several occasions in private notes written before 1910, confirms Yeats's long-standing recognition of Milton's importance.

2. Evidence of Encounters

The most concrete evidence of Yeats's actual encounters with Milton may be found in his library.[10] Its contents confirm and help to characterize Yeats's interest in Milton and in his critics. A recent search has revealed that Yeats owned several editions of Milton's work. While his library still contains the Temple Classics edition of Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes and Other Poems (1849), and it may be assumed that he had access to the complete works of Milton in any of several popular editions, it is of particular interest to note that he possessed certain 'special' editions including Miltor Early Poems, decorated by Charles Ricketts; Paradise Lost, illustrated by William Blake, printed in 1906; and On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, again illustrated by William Blake, and with a note by Geoffrey Keynes (1923).

In fact, Yeats appears to have been generally interested in illustrations to Milton, and especially Blake's as the following remark from "Blake's Illustrations to Dante" (1897) suggests:

> [Blake]did . . . many designs to Milton, of which I have . . . seen those to Paradise Regained; the reproductions of those to Comus, published, I think, by Mr. Quaritch; and the three or four to Paradise Lost, engraved by Bell Scott--a series of designs which one good judge considers his greatest work.(E&I, 125)

Unger has already noted that "it is unlikely that Yeats was unresponsive to Blake's preoccupation with Milton" (197). Indeed, Yeats's study of Blake in the 1890's surely provided him with a special opportunity to explore Milton's work and his place in tradition through a perspective that was coloured by his experience of Blake.[11]

In addition, Unger and Aldrich (209, 121) report that Mrs Yeats gave her husband's copy of Milton's poems to Richard Ellmann. The back fly-leaf of that volume is inscribed with the first few lines of "News for the Delphic Oracle" which both Unger and Aldrich associate with Milton's "Nativity Ode," Aldrich--as already noted--having examined the association between the two poems in some detail in his more recent study, Myth against Myth (121-23). Further, Ellmann has recorded that Yeats encountered Milton's poetry for a slightly different reason when he proposed emendations to Agnes Tobin's translations of Milton's Italian poems in 1906 (Identity, 130).

Finally, it must be observed that Yeats's library still contains a dog-eared copy of Denis Saurat's Milton: Man and Thinker.[12] Yeats's attention to Saurat's book will be considered more fully at a later point in this study. Here it is sufficient to note that this attention was understandable, considering that Yeats shared many of Saurat's concerns including Blake, the occult, and the poet's use of dogma or mythic thought. Since these were areas of interest to Yeats long before the appearance of Saurat's book, it is most likely that Saurat's views were attractive to Yeats because they renewed old enthusiasms and confirmed opinions already held.

Yeats's opinion of Milton, as well as his susceptibility to his influence, is revealed in his more than fifty references and several allusions to Milton and his works.[13] These references and allusions span the whole of Yeats's career and, in the end, point to a general kinship

between Yeats and his most important Renaissance precursor. Indications of the special areas of Milton's influence emerge from an examination of Yeats's direct references to Milton and his works which, in the following pages, have been organized within categories of art, nationalism and tradition, while the effects of that influence may be discerned from an exploration of Yeats's knowledge of Milton's specific works as well as consideration of less direct evidence of general kinship.

CHAPTER II

Areas of Influence

1. Art

Yeats's attitude to Milton's art, that is, his craftsmanship, was typically ambivalent. On the one hand he seemed to assent to descriptions of Milton as a "rhetorician" and condemned him for introducing "a deplorable Roman influence" into English poetry. On the other, he applauded his "regulated speech" and used the opening lines of Paradise Lost to illustrate the characteristics of the kind of "vivid speech" which moved him so much.

That ambivalence which emerges more clearly in later remarks is foreshadowed in a letter to United Ireland, 23 December 1893, in what is perhaps his first published reference to Milton. Citing Milton as an example of a man of letters who was also involved in politics, Yeats issues the following warning:

> I did not say that the man of letters should keep out of politics, but I remember the examples of Hugo, Milton and Dante [,] but only that he should, no matter how strong his political interests, endeavour to become a master of his craft, and be ever careful to keep rhetoric, or the tendency to think of his audience rather than of the Perfect and the True, out of his writing. (UP, I, 307)

In all likelihood that remark, with its negative overtones, may be traced to Yeats's early contact with William Morris. In a review of The Well at the World's End in 1896, Yeats observes that Morris hated rhetoric, "for rhetoric is the triumph of the desire to convince over the desire to

reveal." He suggests that Morris would have defined good writing as "writing full of pictures of beautiful things and beautiful moments" and recalls his opinion of earlier poets:

> 'My masters . . . are Keats and Chaucer, because Keats and Chaucer make pictures.' Dante he held for a like reason to be more a poet than Milton, who, despite his 'great, earnest mind, expressed himself as a rhetorician.' (UP, I, 420)

Yeats's recollection of this remark is more colourful in Four Years: 1887-1891 where he recounts how Morris was distracted from an attack of gout by the introduction of "the hated name of Milton" which brought forth the denunciation of Milton which Yeats was not to forget (A, 145).

Yeats's own conviction that classicism in general had had a negative influence on English literature after Milton is apparent in at least two passages: the first, an entry in a private notebook begun 7 April 1921, where he "deplore[s] the rigidity of the Roman influence brought into English letters by Milton";[14] the second, a letter to Michael's schoolmaster now published in Explorations, where he warns him not to teach his son "one word of Latin. The Roman people were the classic decadence, their literature form without matter. They destroyed Milton . . ." (E, 321). These remarks, specifically about Milton's style, may be more profitably examined in the light of Yeats's view of Milton's place in literary tradition. They are cited here because of their relevance to Milton's art and the importance of classicism to that art, and also because they help to characterize the fears which led to Yeats's desire to get Milton off his back and rid himself of "'Miltonic' generalizations" in 1913.

Those comments made in letters to Lady Gregory in January 1913, pertain to Yeats's apparent inability to escape a 'Miltonic' influence in his own poetry, a condition which persisted throughout his career, as is

indicated by his confession in a late letter to Edith Shackleton Heald, 5 March 1938: "now that I have created nothing for a good many days and have ceased to read my brother and Milton I begin to feel I can face my fellow men again" (L, 907). Like his remarks about Milton's classicism and rhetoric, those comments signal an awareness of points of vulnerability in his own work as much as they serve as criticisms of Milton. Certainly, Yeats was ever-conscious of the negative effects of the intrusion of politics into his poetry, especially in the early years of his career, and always, as so many of his remarks reveal, he strove to avoid form that was not infused with the energy of life.

On the whole, however, Yeats's admiration for Milton's achievement overshadowed his criticisms. In 1902 he remarked, with favour, upon Milton's speech:

> Ordinary speech is formless, and its variety is like the variety which separates bad prose from the regulated speech of Milton, or anything that is formless and void from anything that has form and beauty. The orator, the speaker who has some little of the great tradition of his craft, differs from the debator very largely because he understands how to assume that subtle monotony of voice which runs through the nerves like fire. (E&I, 17-18)

This comment serves as a corrective to the negative implication of his reference to Milton in the earlier admonition that men of letters should take care as to how they mingle art and politics. Here Milton stands as a representative or a great tradition of craftsmanship. Leonard Unger has suggested that since Yeats's subject in this 1902 essay, "Speaking to the Psaltery," is prose, and since Yeats wrote of the great oratorical tradition, "his expression 'the regulated speech of Milton,' must be a reference to Milton's prose rather than his poetry" (198). Unger supports his contention by citing Hone's observation that Yeats read 'a little of

Milton's prose' each day before working on his own essay, "J. M. Synge and the Ireland of his Time" (198). In addition, Hone's description of Yeats as a public speaker--"He seemed . . . to be discoursing with himself rather than to be persuading others, as his Miltonic periods flowed in unbroken rhythm"--provides a further comparison of Yeats's prose, albeit his 'spoken' prose, with Milton's, while the "famous utterance of Milton which always brings Yeats to mind as an orator" for Hone is the passage from Areopagitica--"A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit. . . ."--which Unger uses to illustrate, not only a stylistic similarity between Yeats and Milton, but also, a common "mystique of art and artist" (Hone, 204; Unger, 201). That mystique embraces the idea that "through his art the artist transcends morality and time to achieve an immortality" which Unger finds "expressed by Milton in a language which produces Yeatsean echoes for the informed reader and we surmise . . . produced familiar echoes in the mind of Yeats himself" (201).

Unger's consideration of the effects of Milton's prose on Yeats's prose and poetry obviates the need to re-examine those effects in particular detail in this study. His analyses of "J. M. Synge and the Ireland of his Time" and Areopagitica lead him to conclude that Yeats's prose, "like that of Milton, abounds in series and in parallel constructions" and achieves with those devices "that oratorical resonance and periodicity which are characteristic of the rhetoric of Milton" (200). Similarly, his consideration of the influence of Areopagitica on "The Second Coming" results in the judgement that Yeats's poem "shows the most obvious and persuasive relationship with Milton's prose. . . . a relationship which is not incidental and isolated but enforced by a pattern of correspondence which

is cumulative and general" (207).

However, while granting the importance of Milton's prose as an influence on Yeats, it is also necessary to recall comments made near the close of Yeats's career which suggest that he admired Milton's poetry as well. In particular, it is important to note the point in "A General Introduction for my Work" (1937) where he uses the opening lines of Paradise Lost as an illustration of vivid speech (E&I, 524).

That late Introduction also confirms the remarkable continuity of Yeats's aspirations, his recollection that he had "tried to make the language of poetry coincide with that of passionate, normal speech" (E&I, 521) being an echo of his 1902 declaration of the need to bring poetry and rhythm "nearer to common life" (E&I, 19).

By 1937, he was able to be more specific about those aspirations and what he sought in the work of others. For example, he recorded his discovery of his need for a "powerful and passionate syntax, and a complete coincidence between period and stanza." He said that having compelled himself to accept the "traditional metres that have developed with the language," he needed "a passionate syntax for a passionate subject matter." He wrote of the need for impersonality in art observing that seventeenth-century prose writers, including the translators of the Bible and Sir Thomas Browne, "created a form midway between prose and verse that seems natural to impersonal meditation" (E&I, 522), a remark which suggests the nature of the form Yeats wished to discover for himself. In addition, he wrote of the need for an old and familiar rhythm, that the imagination may be "carried beyond feeling into the aboriginal ice"

(E&I, 523). Finally, he explained his own combination of blank verse and lyric, or ballad, metre:

> When I speak blank verse and analyse my feelings, I stand at a moment of history when instinct, its traditional songs and dances, its general agreement, is of the past. I have been cast up out of the whale's belly though I still remember the sound and sway that came from beyond its ribs, and, . . . I smell of the fish of the sea.(E&I, 524)

The "general agreement . . . of the past" is yet another description of the unified sensibility elsewhere expressed as Unity of Being. Thus, when Yeats located Paradise Lost at that crucial moment of history and detected behind its opening lines the ghostly voice of the folk singer as an "unconscious norm" he connected Milton's poem with the ideal which had served him throughout his career.

Moreover, the manner in which Yeats detected that ideal in Milton's verse, the emphasis of the folk singer crossed with the emphasis of passionate prose, the folk song present as "but a ghostly voice, an unvariable possibility, an unconscious norm," illustrates how the seventeenth century in general was important to him, as the point where the ideal past and modernity met. His discovery of that importance, however, had occurred much earlier. It too may be traced back to 1902, but to his essay on Spenser written for his edition of Spenser's poems where Yeats describes the 'moment of history' as a "cross-road" inhabited by both Spenser and Milton. The centre of that cross-road is a point of choice where the presence of alternatives signals a falling away from the integrity of the past. Classical metres and rhyme are two of those alternatives, and as Yeats observes, Milton's preference maintained a link with the past which he himself did not always sustain:

> Milton was in the end to dislike rhyme . . ., and it is certain that rhyme is one of the secondary causes of that disintegration of the personal instincts which has given to modern poetry its deep colour for colour's sake, its overflowing pattern, its background of decorative landscape, and its insubordination of detail. (E&I, 357)

While forming these remarks it is highly likely that Yeats had Milton's Preface to Paradise Lost in mind, including his statement that rhyme is "no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse."

Generally speaking, of the two poets--Milton and Spenser--Yeats seemed to prefer Milton, not only because of his rejection of rhyme, but also because of the impact of his poetry. At a later point in "Edmund Spenser" Yeats remarked that Spenser was driven to his death "just as he was rising to something of Milton's grandeur in the fragment that has been called Mutabilitie" (E&I, 362). Perhaps Yeats's preference for Milton may be explained by the fact that Milton lived so many years after Spenser, when the cross-road had almost been passed, so that Milton, more than Spenser, was forced to grapple with conditions which more closely resemble those of the modern world. In any event, an examination of Milton's art, or Milton as craftsman, contributes to an understanding of his place in Yeats's scheme of history and helps to show what, in seventeenth-century English poetry, made the late English Renaissance so important to him.

Moreover, a comparison between Yeats's views and those of his contemporaries points to the originality of Yeats's reaction to Milton. At a time when Milton was at the centre of a controversy whose "pressing issues," according to Cleanth Brooks, had "to do with Milton as an artist," and whose attack had "to do with the nature of his art," Yeats continued to defend, and even sought to emulate, Milton's art.[15] While others,

including Pound and Eliot, sought to create a thoroughly modern style by calling for a movement away from the realm of art towards the language and syntax of everyday prose, Yeats, as his remarks of 1902 and 1937 indicate, persisted in his attempts to make a language for himself which combined the qualities of art and common speech. Yeats's references to Milton in this regard suggest that he had read Milton's work with an awareness of the demands of the genres he employed, not simply of his own twentieth-century needs. Indeed, they suggest that those needs can best be filled through careful scrutiny of the manner in which Milton met those demands. Summing up the case against Milton and the Grand Style, Patrick Murray particularizes the attack, observing that it "was directed not so much against the Latinate Diction as against the Latinate Syntax" (Milton: The Modern Phase, 24). If Murray's assessment is correct, then Yeats's independence becomes even more remarkable since, as he recorded in 1937, Milton's syntax, and the metrical arrangements which it satisfied, seem to have provided him with the key to the modern style which he sought. Explaining why he created in dance plays "the form that varies blank verse with lyric meters," he notes:

> The contrapuntal structure of the verse . . . combines the past and present. If I repeat the first line of Paradise Lost so as to emphasize its five feet I am among the folk singers . . ., but speak it as I should I cross it with another emphasis, that of passionate prose . . .; the folk song is still there, but a ghostly voice, an unvariable possibility, an unconscious norm. . . . (E&I, 524).

This appreciation of Milton's blank verse illustrates a further difference between Yeats and his contemporaries. While Yeats recognized the virtue of Milton's verse as early as 1902, and in 1937 regarded it as a bridge to the general agreement of the past, Pound could not reconcile its value with its cost:

> Milton undoubtedly built up the sonority of the blank verse paragraph in our language. But he did this at the cost of his idiom. He tried to turn English into Latin; to use an uninflected language as if it were an inflected one, neglecting the genius of English, distorting its fibrous manner, making schoolboy translations of Latin phrases. . . . (Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, ed. T. S. Eliot (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1954), 237-38)

While Pound was content to criticize Milton's language, and then rest, Yeats worked to analyse Milton's achievement, to discover how it could contribute to the making of the 'vivid speech' which he desired. That is not to say that he attempted to imitate Milton's verse. Rather, it suggests that he attempted to learn from Milton's techniques. For example, Curtis Bradford who summarizes Yeats's use of blank verse in a recent article, "Yeats's 'Last Poems,'" notes that Yeats's last poem in blank verse was "In Tara's Halls," written in June 1938. Even there, he discerns the "frequent repetition of words at the ends of the lines gives the effect of rhyme as it so often does in Milton" (89-90), indicating that Yeats continued to regard Milton as a master.

On the other hand, Yeats's ambivalence to Milton can not be totally overlooked, even though it complicates Yeats's relationship to contemporary critics. In spite of the fact that Yeats's 1913 remarks in his letter to Lady Gregory must be regarded in the light of his proximity to Pound and may possibly be dismissed as the product of his influence, it is important to note that Pound's attitude to Milton might well have been coloured by his association with Yeats. The extent to which Yeats's early remarks anticipated Pound's contributions to the 'Milton Controversy' which arose in the mid-nineteen-tens becomes apparent when those remarks are compared with Pound's later pronouncements. For example, when Pound wrote in 1914 of "the definiteness of Dante's presentation, as compared with Milton's

rhetoric" (Literary Essays, 7), his decision to contrast "Dante's presentation" and "Milton's rhetoric" suggests a debt to Yeats's report of Morris's assessment of Milton. Pound's other criticisms include his repeated condemnation of his 'Latinized English' and his warning in 1917 that "we have long since fallen under the blight of the Miltonic or noise tradition, to a stilted dialect in translating the classics, a dialect which imitates the idiom of the ancients, rather than seeking their meaning" (Literary Essays, 287, 232). Yeats had similarly warned of the dangers of Milton's classicism in his Journal for 1909 and in the 1910 lecture, "Friends of My Youth," well before Pound's pronouncements.[16] Moreover, the fact that Yeats repeated his warnings of the dangers of Milton's classicism in his notebook in the early twenties, and in his letter to Michael's schoolmaster in 1930, indicates that Yeats continued to disapprove of certain aspects of Milton's influence.

A closer examination of Eliot's criticisms of Milton reveals a similar agreement with Yeats's view, so that in a very real sense, it is possible to suggest that Yeats anticipated the controversy which led to the modern dislodgement of Milton and seemed to spring from Eliot's remarks. Certainly the characteristics in Milton which produced the ambivalence in Yeats's response to him were among those which inspired Eliot's total rejection. For example, when Eliot wrote in 1921 that Milton and Dryden as "the greatest masters of diction" in English "triumph with a dazzling disregard of soul" (Selected Essays (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 288, 290) he described a cold formalism which Yeats had already associated with Milton in his Journal and "Friends of My Youth." Further, Eliot's charges that Milton lacked a "visual imagination," that

his images do not give Shakespeare's "sense of particularity," and that his language is "artificial and conventional" (On Poetry and Poets (New York: The Noonday Press, 1961), 158) may be compared with Yeats's desire "to get rid of Miltonic generalizations" and his late remark that the classical mythology of "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" is "an artificial ornament" (AV(B), 295). Further, Eliot held that Milton's language reflected--or helped to cause--the general dissociation which set in during his time. He charged that Milton had produced "rhetoric," a claim also made by Yeats, which is

> not necessarily bad in its influence; but . . . may be considered bad in relation to the historical life of a language as a whole. . . . The living English which was Shakespeare's became split into two components one of which [rhetoric] was exploited by Milton and the other [the tradition of conversational language in poetry] by Dryden. (On Poetry and Poets, 161)

Indeed, far from being a model for moderns to follow, Eliot considered that Milton had "done damage to the English language from which it has not wholly recovered" (On Poetry and Poets, 164).

However, it is misleading to pursue the comparison between Pound's and Eliot's rejection of Milton, and Yeats's ambivalence, too far. Yeats did not share his contemporaries' inability to see Milton as a master for modern poets and his criticism was contained within a broader, more complex view of Milton which was built up throughout his career. His criticisms of Milton cannot be attributed solely to his attention to Pound, Eliot and other anti-Milton commentators. Even while acknowledging, with Unger, that "Milton's rhetoric . . . had not been so cold when it gave [Yeats] images and ideas for The Second Coming in 1919, or when he

sought stylistic inspiration for his essay on Synge in 1911, or when it 'ran through the nerves like fire' in 1902" (210), it is also necessary to remember Yeats's criticism, and to recall that it was the ambivalence in Yeats's response both to Milton and to the seventeenth century as a whole which made both so valuable to Yeats as a modern poet. Because he perceived in them the origins of the modern dilemma, as well as vestiges of his ideal, they were especially capable of contributing to his discovery of a solution to that dilemma:

2. Nationalism

Milton's concern for his nation is an important aspect of the tradition which he passed down to subsequent poets. Milton himself was important to Yeats because he occupied a significant place in the tradition which Yeats organized in his scheme of history, and because, like Yeats, he was conscious of his own part in shaping and transmitting the tradition to which he belonged. He described that part in the autobiographical passage in The Reason of Church Government where the motivating force of his concern for his country, the "mystique of the nation" to which Unger refers (202), is readily apparent:

> I applied myself . . . to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue; not to make verbal curiosities the end, that were a toilsome vanity, but to be an interpreter and relator of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother dialect. That what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a Christian, might do for mine. . . . (ed. Hughes, 668)

The Reason of Church Government was written in 1642, when Milton was only 34 years old. Thus, it appeared at a relatively early point in his career, just as Yeats's nationalistic prose, which culminated in his contributions to Samhain, appeared before his major poetry and drama. Like Milton's relatively early biographical remarks, much of Yeats's early prose was directed towards the discovery of an appropriate subject and form for his work, as well as the establishment of a link between his nationalism and literary aspirations. In Milton's day, that link needed no explanation, assured as it was by the correspondence of all parts of the Renaissance world. Yeats, however, had to explain the interdependence

he perceived between nationalism and literature and show how nationalism was important to modern literature.

Accordingly, in Samhain: 1904, he wrote that "the subject of all art is passion" which must be "aroused into a perfect intensity by opposition with some other passion, or . . . law, that is the expression of the whole whether Church or Nation or external nature" (E, 155). That, of course, is a characteristically modern remark which would not have occurred to a Renaissance mind, even though in retrospect it may be applied to a Renaissance work. Similarly, Yeats's definition of National Literature as "the work of writers who are moulded by influences that are moulding their country, and who write out of so deep a life that they are accepted there in the end" (E, 156), is descriptive of work produced in any emerging nation, twentieth-century Ireland or Puritan England. Indeed, his question as to whether or not a national literature should be written in "the language that [a] country does speak or the language that it ought to speak" (E, 156), which leads to speculation as to whether "Milton was an Englishman when he wrote in Latin or Italian" (E, 156), suggests that Milton was definitely in Yeats's mind as he tried to articulate the relationship between nationalism and literature. Certainly his remark about Milton's choice of language, which surely relates directly to the Irish-English controversy in contemporary Ireland, echoes Milton's concern about writing in the 'mother tongue' or 'dialect,' while his 1904 definition of National writers is anticipated by his own remarks in the [Dublin] Daily Express, January 14, 1899, where Milton is cited as a national writer:

> All literature and all art is national. . . . Shakespeare, Calderon, Milton, in writing of the history and legends of other countries, have written out of emotions and thoughts that came to them because of their profound sympathy with the life about them. (UP, II, 141)

Further evidence of a similarity between Milton's nationalism and Yeats's is available in an earlier paragraph where Yeats remarks that there is "no feeling, except religious feeling, which moves masses of men so powerfully as national feeling" (UP, II, 140). Here, as in his later remarks in Samhain: 1904, Yeats links the Church and State as forces which inspire men, even as Milton wrote of his desire to write as an Englishman and a Christian.

Throughout his career Yeats regarded Milton as a national poet who could serve in several ways as a model for contemporary Irish writers. In his first, somewhat ambivalent, reference to Milton in 1893, he cites his example to illustrate the dangers of a poet's involvement in politics. More positively, in "A List of the Best Irish Books" which appeared in the Bookman, October, 1895, he suggests exposure to Milton as a corrective to indiscriminate reading in Irish national literature by those whose chief interest is political and who make "no distinction between literature and rhetoric" (UP, I, 383). In fact, he cautions against a total ban of Irish literature because it will have its desired effect only if it drives his countrymen "to read Goethe and Shakespeare and Milton, the more and the better" (UP, I, 384).

Milton's value to the national character of Ireland is even clearer in remarks made during an interview which appeared on April 25, 1902 in a London paper called The Echo. Yeats points out there that the pernicious effects of the English influence on Ireland come, not from great writers

like Shakespeare and Milton, but from "the very worst type" of Englishmen:

> 'The Gaelic Movement is helping to preserve the national character of the people, and to prevent the country from being an imitation England. When an Irishman begins to resemble an Englishman, it is the very worst type that he resembles. It is not Shakespeare and Milton that have been superseding the Gaelic poets in Ireland, but the half-penny comics; in fact, Anglicisation has meant vulgarization.' (UP, II, 288)

Much later, in his Autobiography, he recalls feeling "a blind anger against Unionist Ireland" because they opposed his national movement and its literature, "not in the interest . . . of Shakespeare and Milton, but of those third-rate English novelists who were almost their only reading" (Memoirs, 84).

An explanation of why some English writing is a bad influence and why Milton is important, to Englishmen and Irishmen alike, is offered in an earlier remark from a letter on "Irish Language and Irish Literature" which appeared in the first issue of The Leader, September 1, 1900:

> . . . if England had been accustomed to use in literary discussion the coarse methods of political discussion, instead of descending to them in rare moments of excitement, she would not now have that remnant which unites her to the England of Shakespeare and Milton. (UP, II, 240)

Thus what is ultimately most important about Milton to Irishmen is his art, his craftsmanship and respect for language. That, along with his nationalistic aspirations, rather than his specific philosophy of nationhood, make him important to those attempting to build a new literature which in its particulars will be very different from English literature but, in general, must do for Ireland what Shakespeare, Milton, and even Bunyan, did for England.

With Lionel Johnson, Katherine Tynan and others, Yeats looked to a similar remnant in his Irish heritage, as he describes in "Poetry and Tradition" (1907):

> We sought to make a more subtle rhythm, a more organic form, than that of the older Irish poets who wrote in English, but always to remember certain ardent ideas and high attitudes of mind which were the nation itself, to our belief, so far as a nation can be summarized in the intellect. If you had asked an ancient Spartan what made Sparta Sparta, he would have answered, the Laws of Lycurgus, and many Englishmen look back to Bunyan and to Milton as we did to Gratten and Mitchel. (E&I, 248)

Thus it is clear that while in other respects Yeats regarded himself as a member of the tradition which descended through Milton, with respect to nationalism, he saw himself in an analogous position, as an Irishman creating a national literature who happened to write in English.

More about what Yeats learned from Milton's example is apparent from a Journal entry of March 12 [1909], eventually published in Estrangement and Autobiographies (494), where he comments on the need for a model of the idea of a nation which would keep that idea alive in the minds of the people. He mentions early attempts to create such a model and his own discovery, made after Synge began to write, of the need "to renounce the deliberate creation of a kind of holy city in the imagination, and express the individual." That discovery is really a discovery of the importance of the precedent offered by Renaissance to the modern age, but it is central to a discussion of the relationship between Yeats and Milton since Yeats suggests that it was possible because of his knowledge of Milton. Again it appears that as an Irishman Yeats wished to emulate Milton's achievement:

> You can only create a model of a race which will inspire the action of the race as a whole, as apart from exceptional individuals, if you share with it some simple moral understanding of life. Milton and Shakespeare inspire the active life of England, but they do it through exceptional individuals whose influence on the rest is indirect. (Memoirs, 184)

Unwittingly, he had already illustrated his point in Samhain: 1904 with his remark that

> Milton set the story of Samson into the form of a Greek play, because he knew that Samson was, in the English imagination, what Herakles [sic] was in the imagination of Greece. . . . (E, 132-33)

That is, Samson is an example of the kind of individual who could inspire a race and Milton's use of his story shows how Irish writers must proceed if they wish to rouse their countrymen.

At several other points in his career, to be considered presently, Yeats refers to the tradition of Milton and Shakespeare in conjunction with other matters. However, from the references already cited, it is apparent that Milton was an important influence on Yeats's nationalism. In part, that influence stemmed from Milton's place in literary tradition; yet its effect was largely possible because of similarities in the lives of Yeats and Milton which marked them as men with public as well as private concerns, and also, as poets of greatness, a status earned by very few.

With respect to their participation in the life around them, Milton and Yeats had much in common. Both were nationalists, revolutionaries and active participants in government. In his Introduction to The Senate Speeches of W. B. Yeats, Donald Pearce observes that both Yeats and Milton were "great imaginative men involved in the practical affairs of their country" (24), while Yeats himself calls attention to a parallel with Milton, citing Milton's contribution to the fight for Protestant minority rights in the Senate debate on divorce 11 June 1925:

> I have no doubt whatever that in the next few years the minority will make it perfectly plain that it does consider it exceedingly oppressive legislation to deprive it of rights which it has held since the seventeenth century. These rights were won by the labours of John Milton and the other great men, and won after strife, which is a famous part of the history of the Protestant people. (92)

Thus, Yeats saw himself as Milton's inheritor in the matter of social and political rights as well as literary tradition.

In addition there are parallels in the pattern of their respective involvement in public life. Both began as idealistic nationalists whose early prose has already been compared, and in the end, both lived to see the establishment of political systems which grew up from, and were to some extent reactions to, the idealism which inspired their early careers. As a result, both felt the need to retreat from an alien social and political scene, and turn to the relative shelter of a protected society, poetry, and systems of thought created to sustain their poetry and root it in experience that was independent of the vagaries of political life.

Commenting on Milton's remarks in The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, Saurat suggests that Milton wished to establish "a sort of provincial oligarchy," a throwback to his Horton period "when he frequented the nobility and chief gentry" (102). Similarly, Yeats envisioned an ideal society, based upon aristocratic principles, much as he experienced during his visits at Coole.

And too, while Milton's vision of a messianic kingdom was supported by his own version of Christian dogma, Yeats's early nationalism was inspired by a messianic hope. As he wrote in "Poetry and Tradition":

> A new belief seemed coming that could be so simple and demonstrable, and above all so mixed into the common scenery of the world, that it would set the whole man on fire and liberate him from a thousand obediences and complexities. We were to forge in Ireland a new sword on our old traditional anvil for that great battle that must in the end re-establish the old, confident, joyous world. (E&I, 249).

This passage is reminiscent of Milton's declaration in Areopagitica that at the second coming of Christ the fragments of Truth will be reunited into an "immortal feature of loveliness and perfection" (ed. Hughes, 742). Moreover, Milton's description of the "wicked race of deceivers who . . . took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds" (ed. Hughes, 742) may well have provided the source for the language of Yeats's expression of his desire to "set the whole man on fire and liberate him from a thousand obediences and complexities," those "thousand obediences and complexities" corresponding to the "thousand pieces" of the virgin Truth described in Areopagitica.

The importance of this passage from Areopagitica where Truth is a perfect shape, analogous to Yeats's perfectly proportioned human body which has been fragmented like much in the modern world, will be discussed presently. Suffice it here to suggest that Yeats's language in "Poetry and Tradition" not only indicates that Milton was a significant influence upon Yeats, but also that Yeats's nationalism was linked to other aspects of his thought through its relation to an ideal that was continually sought. That is, the whole man which will be found in the new Ireland is the whole man whom the poet must engage in his work and is represented by the perfectly proportioned human body which symbolizes the Unity of Being which Yeats called his ideal.

3. Tradition

For both Milton and Yeats, nationalism was inextricably bound up with artistic and philosophical concerns which lead directly to consideration of the traditions to which both appealed. The nature of their appeal may be compared by examining the analogy which may be drawn between Milton's De Doctrina Christiana and Yeats's Vision, each written by a mature poet in response to a need to root his poetry in a system of thought which organized disparate elements in experience. This analogy has already been noted by Northrop Frye who terms both "an infernal nuisance" which none the less must be heeded by students of Milton and Yeats ("The Rising Moon: A Study of A Vision," in HG, 14). Donald Torchiana also comments, but with particular regard for nationalism and its relationship to the more universal world of poetry:

> [Yeats tended] to play down or hold back mention of his Anglo Irish identification, modern or Augustan, in his final draft of poems or in his own collected works. . . . He probably realized that too obvious an emphasis on Protestant Ascendancy culture in his work might limit his national audience and baffle his wider audience outside Ireland. An analogy may be possible in the similar difference between the dogmatic Milton of De Doctrina and the universal Milton of Paradise Lost. Yet, as with Milton, Yeats's local and private thoughts also exerted a tremendous pressure on his finished work. (Yeats and Georgian Ireland, xiii)

That is, both poets not only had a similar need for a 'dogma' which they had to create for themselves, but also used their creations in similar ways.

Denis Saurat is more specific about the relationship between Milton's poetry and De Doctrina and the more general relationship between poetry

and belief which it typifies. It is probable that his remarks on this matter were among the strongest reasons for Yeats's attraction to his book. Commenting at the beginning of Part III of his study, on pages which a recent examiner says were well-worn by Yeats, Saurat notes that while Milton incorporated little data in his prose (that is, his dogma was not as dogmatic as it might have been), he was very precise in his poetry. In Saurat's view, "Milton looked upon dogma as a sort of myth, chiefly useful for poetic purposes" (203). Even then, however, he always supplemented it "with an inner, psychological meaning, which gives to the poetry its human, permanent value, whatever may happen to the dogma" (203). Holding that Milton "did exactly what he liked with his subject," Saurat concludes that "it is . . . exclusively the human truth of the poetry that may justify the poet" (206). Thus, for Saurat, Milton's poetry survives as a record of human experience. His prose, on the other hand, is marked by "a resistance and a reticence" which causes Saurat to suspect a deliberate withholding of personality on Milton's part (204). Or, taking his argument to another plane, he implies that the difference between Milton's prose and poetry is analogous to the difference between the written word of the scriptures and the internal, unwritten word of the Spirit.

It is not difficult to see why these remarks held Yeats's attention. Surely he found here a description of the relationship he was attempting to establish between his own poetry and A Vision. Human truth, and not the system, always prevails in Yeats's better poetry, and when it does not, and the system intrudes, then his poetry suffers as it rarely does for any

other reason. Such intrusion is evident, for example, in Yeats's relatively unsuccessful poem on the death of Robert Gregory, "Shepherd and Goatherd," particularly in the language of the final consultation:

> He grows younger every second
> . . . . . .
> He unpacks the loaded pern
> Of all 'twas pain or joy to learn,
> Of all that he had made.
> . . . . . .
> Knowledge he shall unwind
> Through victories of the mind,
> Till, clambering at the cradle-side
> He dreams himself his mother's pride,
> All knowledge lost in trance
> Of sweeter ignorance.
>
> (CP, 162-3)

On another page, 207, which also appears to have been of particular interest to Yeats, Saurat deals further with the poetic value of dogma and the poet's use of mythology, matters of extreme importance to Yeats's work, and to twentieth-century poetry in general. Contending that "Milton needed dogma," he suggests that "the need of mythical thought, so strong in many poets, corresponds to a deeper tendency than the intellectual one" (207). That is, the poet's need for mythical thought for his poetry parallels, but is separate from, his intellectual needs which are satisfied through his prose. The validity of Saurat's distinction between two operations of the mind at work in poetry and prose respectively, need not be raised here. What must be considered is Saurat's declaration that poets need myths, and his choice of Shelley, who built a myth out of Greek fragments, and Blake, who made one out of "the queerest materials," as examples of poets who made and used their own myths. Saurat's references to Shelley and Blake undoubtedly increased Yeats's sympathy

with his views since Yeats himself had remarked on both poets in respect to the same subject much earlier in his career.

In addition, when he addresses the poet's attitude to his mythology and the relationship of that attitude to belief, Saurat touches upon a fundamental modern problem which is largely responsible for the character of the modern era. In this regard, he suggests that poets are sorry when they cannot believe their fictions and explains, using Milton as an example, that "Milton believed through his political needs and his high need of sincerity, whereas intellectually he was very near to not believing" (207).[17] Finally, he puts that belief in yet another context when he notes that Milton insisted that his Christian myths were true while those of the ancients were false (207).

Although Saurat's views are highly personal and many of his conclusions are untenable when brought to bear upon Milton's achievement, they are introduced here, and must be accepted here, because they apparently interested Yeats, and because they illustrate how Yeats might have read Milton, armed as he was with the same personal interests and conditioned by the same historical context. Saurat's remarks are, of course, those of a modern reader who, more than most readers, superimposed modern concerns upon matters viewed very differently in the Renaissance. His work is an extreme example of the difficulty of attaining a view of the past that is not coloured by the needs of the present. Its value stems from the fact that it is an awareness of present needs which determines the manner in which the past influences the present. Milton's modern importance can thus be explained in part by his need for a mythology as a system which can organize experience, since Milton both lived when a single world-

view was generally taken for granted, and extracted aspects of that view to construct a system to suit his own particular needs.

Saurat's distinction between intellect and belief points to a major modern problem: if a mythology or philosophical system is not regarded as an absolute truth, something to be believed without question which organizes reality to satisfy intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs, can it function adequately, or at all? And if it can not function, or can only partially function, how can moderns hope to achieve for themselves the ideal which, in retrospect, seems to have been attainable in the Renaissance? How, in fact, can they ever hope to achieve unity on any level--individual, national or cultural--if they can not believe in a basis for that unity?

Yeats's version of these same concerns may be found in a passage from Owen Aherne's Introduction to the 1925 edition of A Vision. Having returned from his travels Robartes entrusts Aherne with the task of arranging his notes for publication. However, before Aherne can finish, Robartes stops him, complaining that he has interpreted the system "as a form of Christianity." He threatens to take his notes to Yeats and an angry altercation ensues:

> 'You will give them to a man," [Aherne] said, 'who has thought more of the love of woman than of the love of God.' 'Yes', [Robartes] replied, 'I want a lyric poet, and if he cares for nothing but expression, so much the better, my desert geometry will take care of the truth.' [Aherne] replied . . . 'Mr. Yeats has intellectual belief but he is entirely without moral faith, without that sense, which should come to a man with terror and joy, of a Divine Presence, and though he may seek, and may have always sought it, I am certain that he will not find it in this life.' This increased Robartes' anger . . . and he accused Christianity of destroying Greco-Roman art and science, because it thought nothing mattered but faith. [Aherne] denied this . . . and reminded him that the system itself made the realisation of God one half of life. (xxi-xxii)

The argument, of course, solves nothing. It merely reveals the conflicts which beset Yeats as a modern poet attempting to reach the kind of relationship to his material, including his own experience and larger cosmic forces, which seems to have existed for poets of the past, including Milton.

The questions raised in this passage and in Saurat's study relate to the poet's use of tradition, a matter of special concern to Yeats in 1925 when both Saurat's Milton: Man and Thinker and A Vision first appeared. The impact of those events, especially the publication of A Vision, is particularly evident in the nature of Yeats's references to Milton. While his earlier remarks tend to emphasize Milton's place in the tradition Yeats inherited, later comments focus upon Milton's use of tradition and suggest how he was attempting to emulate his important precursor.

For example, advising Monk Gibbon, an aspiring poet in 1932, Yeats remarks that

> there is a sense in which nothing matters but subject matter. I think that both Dante and Milton and perhaps Shakespeare toiled through libraries of works with the conscious purpose of learning to think poetically, which is much the same thing as believing in some scheme of the world. (Letter to Monk Gibbon, March 12 [1932], cited in The Masterpiece and the Man: Yeats as I knew Him (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1959), 137)

He addressed the problem in more detail in his Introduction to The Ten Principal Upanishads (1937) where his comments help to clarify the relationship between the poet and belief, if not poetry and belief. Referring to the translation which he produced with Shree Purohit Swāmi, he announces his satisfaction:

> . . . I have excaped that polyglot, hyphenated, latinised, muddied muddle of distortion that froze belief. Can we believe or disbelieve until we have put our thought into a language wherein we are accustomed to express love and hate and all the shades between? When belief comes we stand up, walk up and down, laugh or swing an arm; a mathematician gets drunk; finding that which is the prerogative of men of action. (8)

Thus Yeats unwittingly described what the creation of A Vision, at least partially, meant to him, and his remarks validate Frye's later observations on the value of A Vision:

> The great advantage of A Vision was that it increased Yeats's awareness of and power to control his own creative process, and so did much to provide the self-renewing vitality, the series of bursts of energy from within, like a jet engine, which is so extraordinary a feature of Yeats's development. It also emphasized certain forward intellectual developments for him, such as the sense of the poetic relevance of history and philosophy, and thus helped to make his later poetry more concrete and precise. (HG, 13-14)

But Yeats had long recognized the liberating power of belief. In "Poetry and Tradition" (1907) he had written that all who have created beautiful things--aristocracies, countrymen and artists--look "backward to a long tradition, for, being without fear, they have held to whatever pleased them." By contrast, those who have no tradition are "always anxious, have come to possess little in life that is good in itself and are always changing from thing to thing, for whatever they do or have must be a means to something else, and they have so little belief that anything can be an end in itself . . ." (E&I, 251). Moreover, the freedom which tradition makes possible also makes possible the recklessness which Yeats found in Castiglione and held to be a prerequisite to creativity. Thus, it is little wonder that Yeats explored the history and philosophies of the world in search of a liberating belief, or that a poet like Milton, who so obviously possessed such a belief, was of such importance to him.

In his Introduction to The Ten Principal Upanishads Yeats suggests that George Russell's preoccupation with the East was an expression of a "need and curiosity" of his time. More generally, he points out that this "need and curiosity" had no one source:

> Between 1922 and 1925 English literature, wherever most intense, cast off its preoccupation with social problems and began to create myths like those of antiquity, and to ask the most profound questions. (9)

He recalls, as examples, poems by T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, W. J. Turner, Dorothy Wellesley, and Herbert Read "which have displaced in myths, not as might some writer of [his] youth for the sake of romantic suggestion but urged by the most recent thought, the world emerging from the human mind" (9-10), concluding that "a still younger generation has brought a more minute psychological curiosity, suggesting an eye where a goldsmith's magnifying glass is screwed, to like preoccupations" (10). It is clear from subsequent remarks, here, where he suggests that in their pursuit of meaning certain modern poets have "thrown off too much . . . the old metaphors, the sensuous tradition of the poets," as well as remarks in "A General Introduction for My Work," also dated 1937, that Yeats did not wholly agree with what younger poets had done with the traditions they claimed, even though he recognized their pursuits as developments from those of his own youth. His advice to young poets reflects what he himself took from previous poets, including Milton, and gives some idea of how he had read those poets with an eye to his modern needs:

> Shree Purohit Swāmi and I offer to some young man seeking, like Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, vast sentiments and generalisations, the oldest philosophical compositions of the world, compositions, not writings, for they were sung long before they were written down. . . . (10-11)

Typically, Yeats cannot close his Introduction without connecting the ancient Indian tradition transmitted through the Upanishads to his more immediate Irish heritage which includes a fragment of philosophy which "seems Asiatic." Yet behind that connection it is possible to see the pressure towards unity which colours all of Yeats's thought and explains what he wishes freedom to achieve:

> It pleases me to fancy [he wrote] . . . that a system of thought like that of these books, though perhaps less perfectly organised, once overspread the world, as ours today; that our genuflections discover that East something ancestral in ourselves, something we must bring into the light before we can appease a religious instinct that for the first time in our civilization demands the satisfaction of the whole man. (11)

Thus, it is possible to see that Yeats's interest in Milton provided him with an example of the poet's relation to his culture--including its religion and tradition--which he could emulate in his own career, idiosyncratically in his creation and use of A Vision, and more typically as part of the general movement of his time, in his pursuit of Eastern philosophy.

Yeats's remarks in the Introduction to The Ten Principal Upanishads were anticipated by a letter of 20 April 1936 to Dorothy Wellesley in which he contrasts their work--Dorothy Wellesley's and his own--with that of their contemporaries, aligning himself squarely on the side of tradition, with Milton, Shakespeare and Shelley:

> . . . ours is the main road, the road of naturalness & swiftness and we have thirty centuries upon our side. We alone can 'think like a wise man yet express our selves [sic] like the common people.' These new men are goldsmiths working with a glass screwed into one eye, whereas we strike ahead of the crowd, its swordsmen, its jugglers, looking to right & left. 'To right and left' by which I mean that we need like Milton, Shakespere, [sic] Shelley, vast sentiments, generalizations supported by tradition. . . . (DWL, 64-65; also L, 853)

Finally Yeats expresses a similar thought in "A General Introduction for My Work" in 1937 which opens with what Yeats has entitled his "First Principle":

> A poet writes always of his personal life, in his finest work out of its tragedy, whatever it be, remorse, lost love, or mere loneliness; he never speaks directly as to someone at the breakfast table, there is always a phantasmagoria. Dante and Milton had mythologies, Shakespeare the characters of English history or of traditional romance; even when the poet seems most himself . . . he is never the bundle of accident and incoherence that sits down to breakfast; he has been reborn as an idea, something intended, complete. (E&I, 509)

These late remarks point to the way in which the modern poet must use the tradition he inherits: by infusing it into his own experience, making it part of his 'phantasmagoria,' or, in more orthodox terms which echo Yeats's remarks in his Introduction to The Ten Principal Upanishads, by translating it into his own language. Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr, calls such use of tradition 'revolutionary,' taking his definition of revolutionary artists from the passage from "Poetry and Tradition" already cited above:

> . . . the great artists 'look backward to a long tradition, for being without fear, they have held to whatever pleased them.' The great artists have also discarded whatever did not please them; and they have taken liberties in altering tradition and have altered it so frequently and so completely that the very artist 'who have been freed by the traditions of art' have been regarded as having 'something terrible about them, a light that is unendurable to eyesight.'[18]

Taking up Wittreich's terminology, Yeats's view of Milton may justly be described as 'revolutionary' in as much as it was tailored to contribute to the tradition which he claimed as his own.

Indications of the crucial position which Milton would occupy in Yeats's highly individual scheme of history appeared very early in Yeats's career. In the essay on Spenser of 1902, for example, Milton was marked

as a figure at the crossroads. A few years later, in two very similar remarks, Yeats defined Milton's position more clearly. First, as Ellmann reports, in a lecture of 1909 he "spoke of 'the old writers as busy with their own sins . . .'" (Identity, 55-56). Then, in a letter to J. B. Yeats which Wade has dated 24 November 1910 he again put "Shakespeare among the old writers and Milton with the new" (L, 555). But Yeats is even more specific about Milton's position as a new writer elsewhere. In his Journal for 9 March 1909, for example, he focuses upon form and the unhealthy tendency towards mere formalism that is latent in Milton's work:

> The revolt of individualism came because the tradition had been degraded, or rather because a spurious copy had been accepted in its stead. Classical morality--not quite natural in Christianized Europe--had become a powerful element of this tradition at the Renaissance, and had passed on from Milton to Wordsworth and to Arnold, always growing more formal and empty until it became ignoble in our time--just as classical forms passed on from Raphael to the Acadamies. Anarchic revolt is now coming to an end, and the arts are about to restate the traditional morality. (Memoirs, 180; also Autobiographies, 490)[19]

Similarly, in his 1910 lecture, "Friends of My Youth," he remarks upon "the idea of academic morals in poetry" which may be found "side by side" with academic form in painting. Here it is apparent that Yeats admired Milton's work, even as he saw in it tendencies whose development he condemns in the work of others:

> . . . the idea of academic morals in poetry . . . also began with the Renaissance. . . . In Milton, in the earnest, passionate mind of Milton, it became a noble and wonderful thing. Then it passed on and entered into the mind of Wordsworth. Sometimes it is a noble thing, taking personal fire from him taking his personal form and life; but more often in Wordsworth it is a very dull thing. . . . And that condition of formal nobleness has gone on into the poetic art of our own day. In Tennyson, as in Wordsworth, the poet is a moralist. . . . ("Yeats on Personality: Three Unpublished Lectures," ed. O'Driscoll, Yeats and the Theatre, 27)

Further, Yeats's remarks in an unpublished passage cited by Thomas Parkinson again point up the ambivalence which is a fundamental characteristic of his attitude to Milton, extending from Milton's art through to his use of tradition. For while Milton had used tradition as Yeats recognized that a poet must, his usage still fell short of the ideal exemplified by Dante in the Paradiso. It is apparent that Dante, like Shakespeare was one of the old writers. Just as they had busied themselves with their own sins, in contrast to Milton who, as a new writer, had been pre-occupied with those of others--according to Yeats's 1909 description, at any rate--so, Dante had systematized his world for the "ecstasy's sake," while Milton is alleged to have written for "the edification of others." Thus, although Yeats appreciated and even emulated Milton's need for what he called 'vast generalizations,' he objected to their intrusion into Milton's work. As Yeats once wrote, 'a poet needs all the philosophy he can get, but he must keep it out of his work,' an injunction which, in his view, Milton had not followed. Moreover, as this passage suggests, the difficulty which began with Milton has been exacerbated by succeeding poets. A portion of this passage will be quoted at length since it is available only in Parkinson's study:

> We tolerate, or enjoy an artificial syntax and a rhythm that is neither speech, nor anything suggesting a song because our thought is artificial. Milton began it by bringing into English Literature a mass of thought 'to justify the ways of God' when it was believed to have value apart from its value as dramatization. In Dante when he is not dramatizing [,?] some lost or suffering soul gives us an emotion of passionate ecstasy. His Paradiso is a mystic vision, an exaltation. He writes it all for that ecstacy's sake, not for the edification of others. Milton brought the mischief from Rome, which systematized what had been natural impulse in Greece, and he thought more of the state than of Paradise, and in Dryden and Pope the mischief is there unmixed--sheer dry lines. Burns and Blake are a revolt, but Wordsworth and even Coleridge and Shelley in much of their work follow Dryden and Milton. So too did Tennyson. The exact equivalent of this tradition in poetry was the academic form of the painter and sculptor. . . . (Cited in The Later Poetry, 185-86)

Thus, Milton had a definite place in Yeats's progress of history. His work embraced a major shift within that progress and provided Yeats with an image to describe the changes which had taken place. The impact of Yeats's reading of Paradise Lost is apparent in, for example, "Discoveries: Second Series" where he distinguished the strength of Christian ascendancy according to the quality of the 'paradise' it established:

> We are completing in this age a work begun in the Renaissance; we are reuniting the mind and soul and body of man to the living world outside us. Christianity revolted against the nature worship of the heathens, and gradually as Christianity completed itself, and especially when the paradise it set in nature's place began to fade, [it] set the mind of man apart like a pebble where nothing is reflected, a hard abstract thing, with nature for tempter and breaker.

Milton's paradise functions similarly, and more obviously in the much later poem, "Fragments" (1931), where the birth of the industrial revolution from Lockean empiricism is a parody of the creation of Eve, but with contrasting consequences: Eden was perfected, not destroyed, by her creation. Yeats on the other hand presents a fall masquerading as a creation:

> Locke sank into a swoon;
> The Garden died;
> God took the spinning-jenny
> Out of his side.
> (CP, 240)

Yet there are further allusions to Paradise Lost in that masquerade and its consequences since, initially, Eve's fall was a similar masquerade, its effect most immediately registered in the garland of roses held by Adam as he learned of her deed:

> . . . Adam, soon as he heard
> The fatal tresspass done by Eve, amaz'd
> Astonied stood and Blank, while horror chill
> Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd;
> From his slack hand the garland wreath'd for Eve
> Down dropp'd, and all the faded Roses shed.
> (IX, 888-93)

The death of the garden in Yeats's poem is a generalization from Milton's reference to those faded roses to which Yeats had even more specifically alluded in his earlier remark in "Discoveries: Second Series," that the paradise which Christianity set in nature's place began to "fade" during the Renaissance.[20]

This first section of "Fragments" is deceptively short. Although only four lines long, its allusiveness allows Yeats to make a sweeping commentary on the fate of civilization. Moreover, Yeats's allusions to Milton's poem not only extend the significance of Locke's discovery over time, they also emphasize the divisiveness of its effects because of the analogous cleavage to which Yeats continually pointed in Milton's own work and in later work written under his influence. That cleavage is most clearly evident in Yeats's remarks on Milton's "Nativity Ode" in A Vision where he describes a falling apart of the sacred and profane:

> I see in Milton . . . an attempted return to the synthesis of the Camera della Segnatura and the Sistine Chapel. It is this attempt made too late that, amid all the music and magnificence of the still violent gyre, gives him his unreality and his cold rhetoric. The two elements have fallen apart in the hymn "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," the one is sacred, the other profane; his classical mythology is an artificial ornament. . . . (AV(B), 294-95)

Yeats's sense of what has been lost to modernity, and was already absent in Milton's day, is apparent from his description of "intellectual innocence" in "J. M. Synge and the Ireland of his Time." In that essay which is contemporary with his description of Milton as the transmitter

of "classical morality" and "formal nobleness" to English poetry, Yeats describes that innocence as a characteristic of an art from an earlier time, before the introduction of impurities, calling it "that delight in what is unforeseen, and in the mere spectacle of the world, the mere drifting hither and thither that must come before all true thought and emotion" (E&I, 314). The price of losing that innocence, whether it be to the Catholic philosophy, Milton's morality or Shelley's "vehement vision," is high: "we lose life by losing that recklessness Castiglione thought necessary even in good manners, and offend our Lady Truth, who would never, had she desired a courtship so anxious and elaborate, have digged a well to be her parlour" (E&I, 314-15).

However, Milton cannot be blamed for the historical moment which his work reflects. According to Yeats's scheme of history, the Renaissance embraced the period from Dante to Milton and was distinguished by man's ability to make the world an extension of his own personality. As described in A Vision, it began with Dante, who provided an example of the "first victory of personality" by writing "the first sentence of modern autobiography" in the Convito, and "[imposing] his own personality upon a system and a phantasmagoria hitherto impersonal" in the Divinia Commedia (AV(B), 289). It reached its peak in the years 1450 - 1550, which saw the reconciliation of Paganism and Christianity, and concluded with Milton, through whom "the art discovered by Dante of marshalling into vast antithetical structure antithetical material became Latinized and artificial" (AV(B), 291 and 296-97).

But Milton provided Yeats with more than a finale to the Renaissance: he helped him to define the whole period. For example, his presentation

of Adam figures prominently in Yeats's description of the significance of the years 1450 - 1550. Having remarked that to the mind of Dürer the reconciliation of Paganism meant

> that the human norm, discovered from the measurement of ancient statues, was God's first handiwork, that 'perfectly proportioned human body' which had seemed to Dante unity of Being symbolized,

Yeats reached a puzzling conclusion:

> The ascetic, who had a thousand years before attained his transfiguration upon the golden ground of Byzantine mosaic, had turned not into an athlete but into that unlabouring form the athlete dreamed of: the second Adam had become the first. (291-92)

Yeats's language here undoubtedly recalls Milton's description of the creation of Adam in Paradise Lost:

> . . . whereat I wak'd, and found
> Before mine Eyes all real, as the dream
> Had lively shadow'd. . . .
> (VIII, 309-11)

The dream became reality. The 'unlabouring form' may be equated with the ideals of Dürer and Dante and with Adam himself who is the realization of God's dream even as he awakens to the realization of his own.

William Carpenter suggests a possible source for this equation of Dürer's ideal with Adam in Yeats's probable exposure to Sturge Moore's study of Dürer which appeared in 1905:

> Moore . . . makes the point that seems to have captured Yeats's fancy, that the artist's purpose was to reconstruct the ideal beauty of the first Adam: 'The beauty of form which he held had been Adam's, and which now was parcelled out among his vast progeny in various amounts as a consequence of his fall--this beauty is an ideal, and his canon (or rather canons) were intended as means to help the artist to approach towards the realization of that ideal.' (dissertation, 162)

But however much Moore's remark might have captured Yeats's fancy, and in spite of Yeats's particular reference to Dürer, the influence of his proportioned figure cannot have been as significant as the more probable, and more potent, influence of either Milton's treatment of Adam in Paradise Lost, or, his description of the homogeneous and proportional

body of truth in Areopagitica. Certainly both illustrate how Milton helped Yeats to define the whole of the Renaissance; for in Paradise Lost, as in Areopagitica, where the body of Truth has been hewed into a thousand pieces, Milton not only recreated his idea of perfect human form (in Adam's case, his idea of the image of God most perfectly realized in man),[21] he also subjected that idea to the destructive forces of experience. Paradise Lost is a dramatization of the instability and loss of perfection within man, in the world about him, and in the cosmos.

By contrast, in A Vision Yeats characterized the Renaissance as a period when forms created by man and God were considered capable of containing life, just as Eden was capable of containing pre-Lapsarian Adam and Eve. At its peak the Renaissance was marked by accomplishments which betrayed "an element of strain and artifice, a desire to combine elements which may be incompatible, or which suggest by their combination something supernatural" (292). Its end came when the energy of life could no longer be held within form, when Yeats could see "in Shakespeare a man in whom human personality, hitherto restrained by its dependence upon Christendom or by its own need for self-control, burst like a shell" (294). Thus, events illustrated for Yeats that the act of containment which gave shape to his concept of the Renaissance is self-destructive, culminating in either the destruction of life, or the destruction of form. Paradoxically, although Milton's critics, including Yeats on occasion, consider him guilty of the former, and suggest that his influence produced an empty formalism, his message is really the latter, that life cannot be contained within form. This, then, is yet another reason why Milton must be placed among the new writers, because he demonstrated that per-

fection conceived as a static ideal cannot contain the energy of life.

Adam and Eve must leave Eden and, in the end, the world is all before them. The sense of adventure which may be perceived in their departure from Paradise may be regarded as but one of the fortunate consequences of their fall. Such a reading of Milton's conclusion is characteristically modern, as Hughes has noted in his textual apparatus (n. to XII, 646-49, new edition). He implies an attraction to the known conditions of this world, in contrast to a decided reluctance to wholly accept an unknown perfection in another, an attraction not unlike that which is apparent in Yeats's Byzantium poems where "what is past, or passing, or to come" and the "furies of complexity" triumph over the artifice of eternity.[22]

Thus it is possible to see a natural progression from the conclusion of Paradise Lost to the development of a reliance upon empirical evidence, the veracity of personal experience and the force of mere energy in the post-Renaissance period. Having largely left Providence behind, that development has been characterized by a growth in human solitude which has led moderns to feel that they must realize their ideals through human power alone, without the aid of a divinely ordered universe, or more often than not, in an apparently alien environment.

Thus the achievements of the Renaissance contribute to an understanding of the modern period because they connect it to its ancestry. For Yeats that connection was not merely sequential. Because he thought in terms of mask and anti-mask, it was possible for him to connect the Renaissance to the modern period by regarding it as a complex understanding which provides a mask for the modern. Thus, more than most, he was able to overcome the isolation which set the modern age and its problems apart

from the experience and traditions of the past. By regarding the Renaissance and its achievements as masks, embodiments of all that was not modern, Yeats was able to define more clearly what remained to the modern. By presenting a comprehensive picture of the Renaissance, regarded from a perspective which had already acquired certain modern characteristics, Milton made a special contribution to Yeats's knowledge of the Renaissance as a mask for the modern. Or, to state the matter more simply, Milton's description of one contrary, helped Yeats to define the other.

For example, Yeats's knowledge of Adam's significance in the Renaissance, especially through Paradise Lost, made it possible for him to use references to Adam to not only define the Renaissance, but also, characterize the modern period by exploring the distinction between modern and Renaissance attitudes to a particular ideal.[23] Moderns cannot, for example, sustain the difficult combination of sacred and profane which for Yeats seemed to have been achieved at an early point in the Renaissance but was already falling apart in Milton's Nativity Ode. Instead, they conceive of a 'profane perfection' which makes a mockery of the sacredness of a past age. Their third Adam is no ideal. He is neither the first, nor the second, but a debasement of both:

> Michael Angelo left a proof
> On the Sistine Chapel roof,
> Where but half-awakened Adam
> Can disturb globe-trotting Madam
> Till her bowels are in heat,
> Proof that there's a purpose set
> Before the secret working mind:
> Profane perfection of mankind.
> (CP, 399)

"But half-awakened Adam" is a step removed from the Adam of Paradise Lost who "wak'd, and found / . . . all real" (VIII, 309-10). He need not be fully alert since the modern age, unlike the Renaissance, responds only to physicality which appeals to basic human instincts, as is appropriate to an age about to accept the rough beast which is at hand. In A Vision [A] Yeats predicted the coming of a radically new era, characterized by its inability to share Milton's ideal:

> When the new era comes bringing its stream of irrational force it will . . . find its philosophy already impressed upon the minority. . . . It must awake into life, not Dürer's, nor Blake's nor Milton's human form divine--the brood of the Sistine Chapel--but organic groups, covens of physical or intellectual kin.. . . (AV(A), 213)

Here, as elsewhere, it is apparent that Milton's value to Yeats extends beyond the traditions he embraced and transmitted to later poets. It rests, also, in his contribution to Yeats's knowledge of the way in which tradition may be most profitably used to express both his age and the age to come. Thus, in the end, Milton's importance is not a matter of admiration. It depends on what his accomplishment taught Yeats about the use of tradition and the development of new literary strategies to accommodate the unknown forces of the future.

CHAPTER III

Effects of Influence

1. Specific Knowledge: Direct References to Milton

Yeats's remaining references to Milton pertain to specific works. Their number and scope indicate that Yeats was familiar with Milton's texts. Indeed, he appears to have cited them easily, often spontaneously, for a variety of purposes.

For example, Milton's description of the creation of the lion in Paradise Lost appears to have been a favourite. Frayne identifies the following passage from Book VII as the source of Yeats's early description of Carleton as "but half articulate, half emerged from Mother Earth, like one of Milton's lions":

> The grassy Clods now Calv'd, now half appear'd
> The Tawny Lion, pawing to get free
> His hinder parts, then springs as broke from Bonds,
> And Rampant shakes his Brindled mane. . . .
> (PL, VII, 463-6; UP, I, 364)

Much later, Yeats alluded to the same passage to describe the unfortunate George Moore as "Milton's lion rising up, pawing out of the earth, but, unlike that lion, stuck half-way" (A, 405).

In a similar fashion, in his review of Lady Ferguson's biography of her husband, Yeats likens her description of the members of their social circle, "dignitaries, professional condemners of the multitude, archbishops and bishops . . .," to Milton's description of the clergy in Limbo in Book III of Paradise Lost:

> . . . then might ye see
> Cowls, Hoods and Habits with their wearers tost
> And flutter'd into Rags, then Reliques, Beads,
> Indulgences, Dispenses, Pardons, Bulls,
> The sport of Winds: all these upwhirl'd aloft
> Fly o'er the backside of the World far off
> Into a Limbo large and broad. . . .
> (III, 489-495)

Recalling Milton's lines, Yeats suggests that Lady Ferguson's readers feel as though they have wandered ". . . in that circle of outer space where Milton saw 'cowls, hoods, and habits with their wearers, tossed and fluttered into rags' before melancholy winds" (UP, I, 404). Similarly, Yeats uses lines from L'Allegro in his attempt to describe Con Gore-Booth in Memoirs:

> Bosomed deep in tufted trees,
> Where perhaps some beauty lies,
> The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
> (78)[24]

Finally, he cites a passage from Comus to illustrate the freedom from narrow nationalist concerns which he felt after the establishment of the Irish Free State:

> How charming is divine philosophy!
> Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute.
> (UP, II, 489)[25]

The ease with which Yeats referred to Milton, on these and other occasions, ought not to be surprising in view of the scope of his several references to Milton's works which extend from citations of the early Elegies V and VII in his notes to Poems of Spenser through to references to Samson Agonistes in Explorations and his Introduction to The Oxford Book of Modern Verse. Indeed, the notes in Yeats's edition of Spenser's

poems, which include references to Areopagitica, L'Allegro, Comus, Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, as well as Elegies V and VII, provide a good indication of Yeats's familiarity with Milton's works.[26] Certainly, as a survey of these notes indicates, Yeats did not confine his reading to Milton's major works. In addition, Ellmann reports he had a different kind of opportunity to study Milton's lesser-known material when he suggested emendations to Agnes Tobin's translations of Milton's Italian poems in 1906.[27] Among Yeats's references to Milton's works in these notes, his mention of Areopagitica is of particular interest, in as much as the passage to which Yeats refers, "A noble and puissant nation . . . as an eagle . . .," is also the passage which Unger regards as a source for "The Second Coming" (n. to p. 6, l. 6, Poems of Spenser, 265; Unger, 205-12). Yeats's note, which Unger does not mention, strengthens Unger's claim that "The Second Coming" may be traced back to Milton's Areopagitica. Further, this note anticipates, and may have precipitated, Yeats's references to the eagle and falconry in general in subsequent poems. Indeed, Yeats's comments, intended as a gloss upon line 138 of Spenser's "Hymn of Heavenly Beauty"--"Native brood of Eagle's kynd"--focus upon the significance of the eagle:

> It was a common tradition in medieval natural history that the eagle strengthened its eyesight by gazing at the noonday sun. Cf. Milton's Areopagitica: 'A noble and puissant nation . . . as an eagle mewing her mighty youth and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam.' (Poems of Spenser, 265)

These remarks, published in 1906, appear to anticipate lines from "Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation" (1909-10):

> How should the world be luckier if this house,
> Where passion and precision have been one
> Time out of mind, become too ruinous
> To breed the lidless eye that loves the sun?
> And the sweet laughing eagle thoughts that grow
> Where wings have memory of wings. . . .
> (CP, 106)[28]

Yeats's gloss also seems to stand behind the opening and closing lines of "These are the Clouds" (1910),

> These are the clouds about the fallen sun,
> The majesty that shuts his burning eye,
> (CP, 107)

and is invoked elsewhere in the poem, where behaviour opposite to that of an eagle describes the weak laying hand on what the strong has done. This note is also relevant to the exhortation at the conclusion of "To a Wealthy Man . . .":

> Look up in the sun's eye and give
> What the exultant heart calls good
> That some new day may breed the best
> Because you gave, not what they would,
> But the right twigs for an eagle's nest!
> (CP, 120)

Thus, Yeats's attention to a Renaissance commonplace through his knowledge of Spenser and Milton provided him with an image which he used to characterize the spirit which he tried to foster in the Irish people. Other later references, notably in "The Hawk" (1916) and "The Second Coming" (1919) may also be traced back to Spenser and Milton as, for example, Unger has done in his explanation of Milton's prose for a source-passage for "The Second Coming" (205), while the description of "an old man's eagle mind" (CP, 347) in "An Acre of Grass" (1936) may be regarded as yet another adaptation of this Renaissance commonplace.

Of all Milton's works, however, Il Penseroso, and the tradition which extends from it through Blake, Shelley and Samuel Palmer's engraving, "The Lonely Tower" (1889), had a most obvious and important influence upon Yeats. It is directly mentioned twice in Collected Poems, in "The Phases of the Moon" (1918)--"The far tower where Milton's Platonist / Sat late . . ." (CP, 184)--and "My House" (1921-22)--"Il Penseroso's Platonist toiled on" (CP, 227)--and once in the prose, in "A General Introduction for My Work" (1937)--"I commit my emotion to . . . learned men. Milton's or Shelley's Platonist, that tower Palmer drew" (E&I, 522). In addition, Yeats alludes to Milton's tower elsewhere, most notably in "Ego Dominus Tuus"--"Under your old wind-beaten tower, where still / A lamp burns on . . ." (CP, 180).

These references to Il Penseroso are noted by several commentators, none of whom give lengthy consideration to Yeats's specific interest in Milton. Daniel Harris makes passing reference to Milton in this regard and provides what is perhaps the most extensive treatment of these poems and the significance of the tower to Yeats. The most negative view of Milton's importance is expressed by Harold Bloom who categorically states that "there is no direct influence whatsoever of Milton . . . upon Yeats" (8). He does, however, concede an indirect influence which he traces from Il Penseroso through Wordsworth's Excursion to Shelley's Alastor and so to Browning and Yeats.

Certainly, Yeats's remarks in "A General Introduction" confirm this association of Milton's and Shelley's Platonists. However, his comments in "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" indicate that he came to his reading of Shelley with a fascination with the symbolic significance of

towers acquired from a variety of sources, almost certainly including Milton's Il Penseroso. In "The Tragic Generation," for example, he recalls that

> an Irish friend . . . lives in a house where beside a little old tower rises a great new Gothic hall and stair, and I have sometimes got him to extinguish all light but a little Roman lamp, and in that faint light and among vague shadows, blotting away the unmeaning ornament, have imagined myself partaking in some incredible romance. (A, 320)

In the essay on Shelley, however, he identifies the tower as "a very ancient symbol," stating his belief that "Shelley had more than a romantic scene in mind when he made Prince Athananse follow his mysterious studies in a lighted tower above the sea. . . ." (E&I, 87). That belief, moreover, stemmed from his own experience--"I know how hard it is to forget a symbolical meaning, once one has found it" (E&I, 87)--which clearly went beyond Shelley and his own romantic re-enactments of the scene, back to Milton himself.[29]

Bloom's position, then, is clearly too extreme, and seems all the more extreme in the light of Yeats's interest in other portions of Milton's poem which will be considered presently. Something of what Milton's tower must have meant to Yeats, more specifically what Palmer's engraving of that tower must have meant, is provided, as Jeffares has already noted, in a passage from "Blake's Illustrations to Dante" in which Yeats cites Palmer's appreciation of Blake:

> 'There is in all such a misty dreaming glimmer as penetrates and kindles the inmost soul and gives complete and unreserved delight, unlike the gaudy daylight of this world. They are like all this wonderful artist's work, the drawing aside of the fleshly curtain, and the glimpse which all the most holy, studious saints and sages have enjoyed, of the rest which remains to the people of God.' (E&I, 125; Jeffares, Comm, 517)

Certainly Palmer's engraving of Milton's tower must have allowed Yeats to imagine himself closer to the enjoyment of the "holy, studious saints

and sages" who might have inhabited the lonely tower of Milton's poem.

Marion Witt also focuses upon the relevance to Yeats of Palmer's interpretation of the scene from Il Penseroso. To illustrate yet another aspect of Yeats's attraction to Milton's scene, Witt includes Palmer's own comment on his drawing in her study. Quoting Palmer, "We must reach poetic loneliness--not the loneliness of the desert but a secluded spot," she observes that "the single light of Palmer's tower became for Yeats the perfect symbol of the solitary contemplative man looking out on the world" ("Making of an Elegy," 118).[30]

With others, such as Harris, Henn and Whitaker, Jeffares and Witt also make general remarks concerning the origins of Yeats's tower symbolism. In Man and Poet Jeffares remarks that Yeats chose to live in a tower of his own because of the symbolic value he attached to towers, because he "had found in Milton, in Shelley, and in Count Villiers de l'Isle Adam towers used as symbols of the search for wisdom carried on by the lonely student" (217-18). In Man and Poet, as in his earlier Circus Animals, Jeffares mentions Yeats's references to Il Penseroso, but does not continue to discuss Milton's particular importance to Yeats. Marion Witt suggests that the tower, which acquired significance for Yeats through his knowledge of Shelley and Villiers de l'Isle Adam, as well as Samuel Palmer's illustration, is placed in a new configuration in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory." Her discussion, however, deals with Milton's influence on Yeats only indirectly, through Palmer. Meanwhile, Henn and Harris trace the ancestry of Yeats's tower back to Milton, but do not elaborate on Milton's particular significance. Finally, Whitaker, who mentions Yeats's reference to "Milton's Platonist" in "My House" in

passing, suggests yet another perspective for Yeats's apprehension of Milton's poem, through his knowledge of Blake, specifically his descriptions of his illustrations to Il Penseroso (282).[31]

In fact, Milton's passage which reads as follows,

> . . . let my lamp at midnight hour,
> Be seen in some high lonely Tow'r,
> Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
> With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
> The spirit of Plato to unfold
> What Worlds, or what vast Regions hold
> The immortal mind . . .
> (ll. 85-91),

had a double attraction for Yeats, and was thus of double importance. The composition of the scene, with its lonely tower, lit by a scholar's lamp and silhouetted by the light of the moon and stars, gave significance to the mythology of place which Yeats finally realized at Thoor Ballylee, while the figure who inhabited the tower, searching the symbol of perfection as Hermes taught, added to Yeats's personal mythology by providing a mask for the expression of yet another aspect of his personality.

In "Ego Dominus" and "Phases of the Moon" evocation of the lonely figure in the tower connects Yeats's search for poetic images with a long tradition of Platonic scholarship. At the same time, the dramatic situation which allows him to be both inside and outside the tower, makes it possible for him to dissociate himself from that figure, to see himself as a thrall to an "unconquerable delusion" in "Ego Dominus," and to turn on himself in self-mockery through the dialogue of Robartes and Aherne in "Phases of the Moon." That is, Hic's dialogue with Ille who is armed with the Yeatsean truth that "Those men that in their writings are most wise / Own nothing but their blind, stupified hearts," as well as Robartes'

assurance that the student in the tower seeks "in book or manuscript / What he shall never find," both serve to locate Milton's image in a modern context which is exclusively Yeats's.

The extent to which that image has become Yeats's is apparent in his reference to "Il Penseroso's Platonist" in "My House" where his self-mockery is gone, and the student's 'toil' is, both physically and symbolically, at the heart of the tower. This tower, accompanied by the reference to Il Penseroso, occupies the structural centre of the second section of "Meditations," midway between stanza one, which serves as an approach from the ancient bridge to the winding stair at the opening of stanza two, and stanza three, which appears to lead from the student's chamber to the world beyond. In reality, however, stanza three moves beyond the tower only in so far as it consolidates the meaning of the tower by linking the student's pursuits to the world of action. At last, the poet at Thoor Ballylee has an opportunity to resolve the dialogue of "Ego Dominus" and assert the congruence of the wisdom of the heart and the scholar's book. That tower now has co-founders, a man of action, a man at arms, and a man of contemplation, a poet, who will leave to his heirs "befitting emblems of adversity."

However, "My House" is also part of a larger poem. In a detailed comparison of the first two sections of "Meditations" Daniel Harris demonstrates that the images of Section II, "My House," all derive from Section I, "Ancestral Houses" (170-71). By showing the relationship between Yeats's twentieth-century realization of his ideal and his recollection of the past achievement of that ideal which may be traced back to the Renaissance country house and Jonson's "Penshurst," Harris illuminates the context of Yeats's use of Milton's image.

But although the context provided by "Ancestral Houses" definitely belongs to the country-house tradition descended from "Penshurst," a key to its significance may also be found in Il Penseroso. Just as Milton's description of the lonely tower stands behind Yeats's description of his tower in Section II, so other parts of Milton's poem may be discerned in Section I where an accumulation of parallel details suggests that Yeats was adapting all of Milton's poem in his attempt to characterize a particularly modern scene. For example, "rich man's flowering lawns," (CP, 225) "the gardens where the peacock strays" and the "levelled lawns and gravelled ways / Where slippered Contemplation finds his ease" (CP, 226) may all be compared with the landscape of Il Penseroso where the Goddess of Melancholy is joined by "retired Leisure, / That in trim gardens takes his pleasure" (ll. 49-50), as well as the "Cherub Contemplation" (l. 54). Moreover, Milton's speaker walks "unseen / On the dry smooth-shaven Green" (ll. 65-66). In addition, in "Ancestral Houses," "life overflows" and "rains down" amid the "rustle" of "planted hills" (CP, 225), while in Il Penseroso, "civil-suited Morn" may be

> . . . usher'd with a shower still,
> When the gust hath blown his fill,
> Ending on the rustling Leaves,
> With minute-drops from off the Eaves.
> (ll. 127-39)

Also, the speaker of Il Penseroso asks to be taken from the flaring beams of the sun, into twilight groves where "dewy-feather'd Sleep" will bring "some strange mysterious dream" (ll. 146-47). In "Ancestral Houses" life is said to overflow "without ambitious pains," "to choose whatever shape it wills," and speculation is dismissed as "mere dreams":

> Mere dreams, mere dreams! Yet Homer had not sung
> Had he not found it certain beyond dreams
> That out of life's own self-delight had sprung
> The abounding, glittering jet. . . .
> (CP, 225)

While these and other echoes suggest that Yeats had the whole of Milton's poem in mind when he composed the first two sections of "Meditations," they not only identify "Ancestral Houses" with the world of Il Penseroso, they also emphasize the deterioration which has overtaken modern remains of past attempts to realize what is essentially an ideal of the Renaissance. The companions of Melancholy who sport upon the lawn in Il Penseroso have, in "Ancestral Houses," become "indifferent garden dieties," (CP, 226) 'indifferent' because no one pays them heed, and also, because they are no longer in awe of Juno whose impotence is represented by the stray peacock in the garden and who is herself merely embodied in a garden urn. Although Yeats's poem is about "the inherited glory of the rich" (CP, 225) which is manifested in their statues, grounds and opulent buildings, and, for all that his description of these houses links them to the Renaissance, through echoes with Milton's poem and the country-house tradition in general, all is made conditional by the opening word, "Surely." Similarly, the 'dreams' of stanza two are not creative dreams which inform a way of life. In fact, life in these ancestral homes is deficient in spirit. The legacy of these rich men is not a way of life but a series of objects. By contrast, the speaker of Il Penseroso, who is brought to similar objects at the close of that poem, inhabits a richly spiritual world. Leaving the lesser dieties behind, he asks to walk among studious cloisters--

> And love the high embowed Roof,
> With antic Pillars massy proof,
> And storied Windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light
> (157-160)--

and to be brought finally to a peaceful hermitage for the contemplation of heaven. That is, Milton's poem is primarily about a mood which deepens into a spiritual condition. By contrast, Yeats's poem is social. The spiritual values which had always eluded the builders of such houses--

> Some violent bitter man, some powerful man
> Called architect and artist in, that they,
> Bitter and violent men, might rear in stone
> The sweetness that all longed for night and day,
> The gentleness none there had ever known--

are closely attached to a social class; yet they never naturally belonged to that class. They were always purchased--"a rich man's flowering lawns" (emphasis mine). Thus, Yeats uses the whole of Il Penseroso in "Ancestral Houses" to expose the bankruptcy of the great country houses of Ireland--Coole excepted--and the inevitable presence of violence and bitterness in modern Irish life.

In "Meditations" the language and images of Il Penseroso are summoned to serve in a context of doubt and questioning. The image of the lonely tower is the only part of the poem directly acknowledged by Yeats, and it is the only part whose original significance, albeit enriched with Romantic adumbrations, is affirmed by his usage. In Il Penseroso the tower is separate from the mainstream of life--"Some high lonely Tow'r". That separateness, along with the student's toil within the tower, occupies the heart of "My House." The distance between the tower and the rest of the landscape in Il Penseroso, along with the contrast between "Ancestral Houses" and "My House," illustrates and measures the distance which Yeats

detected between the life of significance which he wished to establish in his tower home and the deterioration of values in the world around him, including the great houses of Ireland.

"My House" is Yeats's declaration of his intention to build his own equivalent to a Renaissance country-house. It is his response to the hostility of twentieth-century society. The poem, and more importantly the act of possessing the tower, is an act of defiance in the face of the seemingly modern determination to defeat the artist through isolation. In this respect Milton's image of the lonely tower is especially appropriate to Yeats, with his unfailing determination to realize a life of value in Ireland, because it emerged from the same context as the life of value which provided the model for his ideal.

Thus, more of Il Penseroso than is first apparent lies behind the first two sections of "Meditations in Time of Civil War." Because Milton's poem is almost contemporary with Jonson's "Penshurst," this detection of Milton's influence does not detract from the significance which comes to "Meditations" from Jonson's poem and the tradition derived from it. In "Meditations," however, Milton's influence predominates, since his poem not only characterizes the quality of Yeats's social ideal, it also relates it to his image of himself as a poet, by locating both in the same literary landscape.

But although Yeats's references to Il Penseroso suggest that Milton made an important contribution to the formation and expression of his social and literary conditions, his references to Paradise Lost, in company with allusions to Milton's poem and the Eden myth in general, indicate that Milton had an even more fundamental significance to Yeats, in as much as each poet attempted to account poetically for the creation of the world.

In this respect, Milton's importance to Yeats is obvious: Paradise Lost remains the most important treatment of the creation myth in the English language. Yeats's interest in the myth is apparent from his several references to Adam, Eden and paradise.[32] A pertinent example may be cited from Samhain: 1908 where Yeats contrasts Adam, the scientist, with Adam, the poet:

> A picture arose before my mind's eye: I saw Adam numbering the creatures of Eden; soft and terrible, foul and fair, they all went before him. That I thought, is the man of science, naming and numbering, for our understanding, everything in the world. . . .
>
> We, on the other hand, are Adams of a different Eden, a more terrible Eden, perhaps, for we must name and number the passions and motives of men. There, too, everything must be known, everything understood, everything expressed. . . . (E, 242)

When Milton described Adam's naming of the creatures of Paradise, he, too, focused upon the understanding which accompanied the process:

> I nam'd them, . . . and understood
> Thir Nature, with such knowledge God endu'd
> My sudden apprehension. . . .
> (VIII, 352-54)

Note, however, the contrast between the laborious efforts of fallen man to name and understand the world about him, and the sudden, God-given, awareness which came to Adam in Paradise. Similarly, in Paradise, the process of naming resulted in Adam's dominance over the creatures of the world. He was told of his power:

> . . . each Bird and Beast behold
> After thir kinds; I bring them to receive
> From thee thir Names, and pay thee fealty
> With low subjection. . . .
> (VIII, 342-45)

By contrast, Yeats's career is a record of his continuing struggle to assert his mastery over his world by bringing it within his creative control.

Yeats's success in this regard may be measured by comparing his work with Milton's. Yeats himself invited a comparison with Paradise Lost very early in his career with references to Eden in "I walked among the seven woods of Coole," his first poem about Lady Gregory's estate:

> How shall I name you, immortal, mild, proud shadows?
> I only know that all we know comes from you,
> And that you come from Eden on flying feet.
> Is Eden far away, or do you hide
> From human thought. . . .
> Is Eden out of time and out of space?
> . . . . . .
>
> I have made this poem for you, that men may read it
> Before they read of Forgall and Dectora,
> As men in the old times before the harps began,
> Poured out wine for the high invisible ones.
> (CP, 469-70)

Here Yeats not only invokes an analogy between Eden and Coole as places, but also attempts to retrieve the relationship which Milton and Adam enjoyed with God and the rest of creation. More specifically, Daniel Harris suggests a contrast between Yeats's invocation to the 'high invisible ones' and Milton's prayers at the beginning of Books I, III and VII.[33] Further, exploiting the contrast between Yeats's speaker and both Milton and his Adam, Harris notes that

> the Miltonic echoes, defining the Seven Woods as an epic realm, brilliantly emphasize the paradox of fallen Adam in the Garden, unable to name the 'high invisible ones' . . ., agonized by having created the Shadowy Waters without knowing the source of his creativity. (15)

But comparisons with Milton's works not only highlight the contrast between the orthodoxy of the Renaissance position and the modern dilemma, they also measure Yeats s progress towards the resolution of that dilemma. For example, the speaker of "My House" is in the process of taking possession of his world and so may be seen as another Adam. As Harris

remarks, by the third stanza, Yeats's speaker has "completed the creation of his world", "his seemingly disorganized meditation on landscape in his founding: walking from bridge to study, he has named the elements of his world, become Adam" (169).[34] Somewhat earlier in his study, Harris summarized the significance of the completion of "My House," noting that

> by the time Yeats crossed the 'ancient bridge' to Thoor Ballylee . . ., he had traversed an immensity of his poetic development. However ill-equipped he often found himself, he had finally accepted the responsibility of becoming his own hero. (163)

The particular importance of Paradise Lost to Yeats's growth in self-possession was, however, established by Yeats himself, in his recollection of its opening lines towards the close of Reveries over Childhood and Youth where they emphasize the clumsiness of his attempts to contact the spirit-world at his first seance, in contrast to the ease with which Milton involved his "Heavenly Muse":

> I was now struggling vainly with this force which compelled me to movements I had not willed, and my movements became so violent that the table was broken. I tried to pray, and because I could not remember a prayer, repeated in a loud voice--
>
> 'Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe . . .
> Sing, Heavenly Muse.'
>
> (A, 104)[35]

Here, as in his early poem about Coole, as well as the tailpiece to Responsibilities which was written the same year as Reveries (1914), Yeats deliberately associates his continuing search for a source of inspiration with Milton's prayers for heavenly guidance. In his analysis of the passage Daniel Harris, who repeatedly points to the Edenic character of Yeats's ideal, focuses upon Yeats's awareness of his 'fallen state.' He

suggests that Paradise Lost is of fundamental importance to the whole of Reveries, in as much as its structure, whose primary form is a completed life, "details an expulsion from the Garden, exile from Ireland and Sligo, known family and places" in the midst of which, Yeats's recollection of Milton's invocation "encapsulates the guilt felt throughout." He summarizes that structure as follows:

> [Reveries] opens with images of Creation . . .; the narrative concludes (section xxxii) with the deaths of his Pollexfen grandparents and the destructive pilfering of their house--symbolic events which displace what Yeats might have written of himself. . . . Closing in a present tense which parallels its beginning, the book is a mental journey whose myth of dispossession remains an aspect of Yeats's present consciousness. . . . Its mythological structure shows an ominous entrance into vacancy, a freedom without meaning. . . . Gnawed by self-recrimination, defensively disclaiming his poetic ambitions, Yeats had somehow reached a point of transition with no Miltonic 'place of rest' in sight. . . . (88-89)

The rest of Yeats's career was devoted to the discovery of a so-called 'place of rest,' the substitution of a myth of possession for the myth of dispossession. Chronologically, the events of Reveries precede "I walked among the seven woods of Coole," and both predate "My House" which was written in 1922, when Yeats had taken possession of his tower home. Indeed, "My House" marks the acquisition of a place of rest and the launching of a new phase of experience for which the events of Paradise Lost were merely preparatory.

Yeats's final references to Milton's work in On the Boiler and Death of Cuchulain emphasize the general kinship which Yeats continued to feel with Milton. In particular, they provoke an analysis of the manner in which Milton's Comus was received by the audience of his day, which in turn points to the way in which Yeats intended his own work to be appreciated.

Commenting on the introductory observation of the Old Man in Death of

Cuchulain, that the audience will not probably be "more in number than those who listened to the first performance of Milton's Comus," B. Rajan remarks that

> This is not to suggest that Comus should be read in the manner of a Noh play but the sense of an inner as well as an outer performance and possibly of a tradition of allusiveness are common to both Milton and Yeats. Yeats's demand is that the reader should be possessed of 'the old epics and Mr. Yeats's plays, about them.' . . . (The Lofty Rhyme, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 25)

The major difference between Milton and Yeats in this regard is that to a very large extent Yeats had to establish the basis for his own allusions by creating his own tradition--or what has elsewhere been termed his 'phantasmagoria'--while Milton could more confidently rely on the currency of a common tradition, which assured quick recognition of a wide range of allusions, not only in Comus, but in his other works as well. That is, identification of a need for 'a tradition of allusiveness' provides a way of describing the impulse behind Yeats's creation of A Vision and his personal mythology of place, which includes the Gregory family, Coole and Thoor Ballylee, as well as his use of 'old epics.' That identification thus makes it possible to compare their value to Yeats as a poet with the value of the classical and Christian traditions and the prevailing world-view of the Renaissance which informed Milton's work. As Rajan's comment suggests, part of that value depends upon recognition of Yeats as a poet of Milton's type, with an intellectual grasp of the whole world of his time, speaking to an audience who belonged to that time. The result of such intellectual congruence is, as Rajan points out, that the poet may communicate on two levels, through an "inner performance," the drama which leads from mutually understood allusions and is carried on at the same time as the "outer performance" which those allusions were called upon to enrich.

2. General Kinship: Miltonic Echoes and Allusions in Yeats's Poetry

Reference to a general kinship between Yeats and Milton points to a need to consider other, less direct evidence of Milton's influence on Yeats; for while the scope of Yeats's direct references attests to the comprehensiveness of his knowledge of Milton, less specific but perhaps more certain proof of his importance is indirectly provided by the character and scope of Yeats's own achievement.

For example, Yeats's remarks in On the Boiler and The Death of Cuchulain indicate that he wished to establish the same relative position between himself, as poet, and his work and audience as he thought Milton had enjoyed in the seventeenth century. In addition, his desire for a source of inspiration akin to Milton's 'Heavenly Muse' is apparent in both "I walked among the seven woods of Coole" and the tailpiece to Responsibilities, as Harris and Carpenter have shown. Moreover, Yeats established himself as a poet of Milton's type in a Journal entry of March 1909 which subsequently appeared in Estrangement and Autobiographies. A portion of this entry, which includes the remark that Milton and Shakespeare inspired the active life of their country through their portrayals of exceptional individuals, has already been cited above, and indeed, has already been compared to Milton's autobiographical remarks in A Reason of Church Government. But the comparison may be taken further. In comments leading up to his remark Yeats described his early attempts to create a model for his nation:

When I was twenty-five or twenty-six I dreamed of writing a sort of Légende des Siècles of Ireland, setting out with my Wanderings of Oisin and having something of every age. Johnson's work and, later, Lady Gregory's work carried on the dream in a different form; and it was only when Synge began to write that I saw that our movement would have to give up the deliberate creation of a kind of Holy City in the imagination, a Holy Sepulchre, as it were, or Holy Grail for the Irish mind, and saw that it must be content to express the individual. (Memoirs, 184; see also A, 493-94) [36]

Although earlier consideration of these remarks focused upon Yeats's nationalism, a pre-occupation with that nationalism ought not to obscure the literary means through which Yeats sought a solution to the Irish problem. In this, too, Yeats may be compared with Milton. Just as he contemplated compilation of a vast Légende des Siècles and pondered the nature of the literary model which both he and his nation required, so Milton also wrote of his search for a model. In The Reason of Church Government he described his consideration of what form he should choose, whether an epic diffuse or brief; what rules he should follow, whether of Aristotle or nature; and what pattern of Christian hero he should select, King or Knight. Similarly, he weighed whether his subject should be modern or ancient. In addition to epic form, he reflected on pastoral drama, tragedy and several kinds of lyric poesy. Yet no matter what his ultimate choice, it is clear that he was continually conscious of the power of the poet

to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, . . .
Teaching . . . with such delight . . . that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult . . . they would then appear to all men both easy and pleasant. . . . (The Reason of Church Government, ed. Hughes, 669-70)

These remarks are in the tradition of Sidney's dictum to teach and delight to which Yeats's desire to ". . . create a model of a race which will inspire the action of the race as a whole" also belongs. Moreover, just as Milton searched tradition for a form, rules, hero and subject, and ended up embracing all the alternatives before him, so Yeats took up and remade what he inherited from the past, including the works of Milton. The nature of this take-over, which has already been called 'revolutionary,' reveals a special relationship to Milton which will be explored in succeeding pages.

Indeed Yeats is one of the few poets whose achievement may be compared with Milton's in terms of the scope of his ambition and the genres he employed. Like Milton, Yeats wrote prose in response to immediate social and political problems and to satisfy less topical, philosophical and professional needs. In addition, he spent long years attempting to perfect a modern drama and along the way remarked on both of Milton's overtly dramatic works, Comus and Samson Agonistes. Similarly, Yeats had ambitions for a long poem and wrote poems of public concern, like Milton's sonnets. In addition, his best poems have reference to a coherent and comprehensive scheme of the universe which is in many respects analogous to the world-view which was generally accepted in the seventeenth century. Although Yeats's lyrics were his supreme poetic accomplishment, it is a tribute to the epic scale of his aspirations that his poetic oeuvre represents the nearest approach to the creation of a successful modern epic that any twentieth-century poet has yet made.[37] In the process, he appropriated almost all forms of lyric poetry, including those represented in Milton's work.

The desire to re-make his inheritance to suit his own needs and the tendency to think in epic terms were but two characteristics which Yeats shared with Milton. In addition, both poets appear to have organized their thought in terms of contraries which are reflected in the 'oppositional pattern' which Leonard Unger describes in Milton's work:

> it is conceivable that Yeats was impressed by the oppositional pattern throughout Milton's work: the pagan-Christian opposition in the Nativity hymn, the obvious contrast between L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, Christian chastity versus pagan sensualism in Comus, the mixing of Christian and classical elements in Lycidas, the Christ-Satan conflicts in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, and the opposition . . . in Samson Agonistes [between "the Hebrew Samson [who] may be regarded as a figure of primary dispensation, and his polytheistic victims [who may be regarded] as antithetical"]. (211, n. 14)

Yeats's fascination with contraries is a dominant characteristic of his poetry and thought--"Between extremities / Man runs his course" (CP, 282)--which occasionally manifests itself in the formal structure and organization of his poems, as, for example in "A Man Young and Old" and "A Woman Young and Old." Perhaps the earliest example of oppositional patterning in Yeats's work is provided by the companion poems from Crossways, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" and "The Sad Shepherd" (CP, 7; 9) which will be examined in some detail because of their many associations with Milton, associations which illustrate why Milton occupied such a crucial position in the literary tradition which Yeats inherited.

"Happy Shepherd" and "Sad Shepherd" are paired poems in the tradition of L'Allegro and Il Penseroso whose influence on subsequent poetry has been traced by R. D. Havens (The Influence of Milton, (New York: Russell, 1961), 437-8 and Chapter XVII, 439-77).[38] Although Yeats was obviously interested in these poems because of the image of the lonely tower in Il Penseroso,

"The Song of the Happy Shepherd" (1885), in particular, suggests that both of Milton's poems had served him as models at an early stage in his career. For example, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" is written in iambic tetrameter, the predominant meter of Yeats's poems. Grey Truth is personified in the manner of Melancholy, Mirth, Jest, Contemplation, and many more, in Milton's poems. Brooks and Hardy point to a similarity between the opening lines--

> The woods of Arcady are dead
> And over is their antique joy--

and the third stanza of Milton's "Arcades":

> Nymphs and Shepherds dance no more
> By sandy Ladon's Lillied banks.
> On old Lycaeus or Cyllene hor,
> Trip no more in twilight ranks,
> Through Erymanth your loss deplore,
> A better soil shall give ye thanks.
> (ed. Hughes, 79-80; Brooks and Hardy, 167)

Certainly both poems are about Arcadia. They share references to shepherds and lush, flowered countryside, as well as expressions of farewell. But while Milton's swains bid farewell to native haunts which they share with nymphs and gods as they set out for a new home in the "better soil" of Arcadia, Yeats's shepherd is leaving a worn convention for the world of 'Grey Truth.' This difference is significant, and typical of Yeats's continual use of Milton to describe the modern age obliquely, by defining it in terms of its difference from the Renaissance. Milton's poem, in fact, provides a normative view of Arcady which as well as any other serves as a reminder of the kind of artificial, ideal world which could be effectively evoked in the Renaissance, but will not serve for the modern age. Yeats's poem is a farewell to a whole tradition and it introduces themes which reappear throughout his career--"Words alone are certain good"; ". . .

there is no truth / Saving in thine own heart." Indeed this last quotation provides a fitting beginning to a career that would be closed by lying down "in the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart" ("The Circus Animals' Desertion," CP, 392).

But Yeats's poem about the death of Arcades is indebted to Milton's for more than a counter-theme. His description of the flight of the golden age in the phrase "the cracked tune that Chronos sings" is quite possibly, as Jeffares has suggested, an echo of Milton's history of Saturn's reign in Paradise Lost (I, 510-21). Milton's association of Saturn with Mount Ida, Olympus, Delphi, Dodona and the Celtic Islands is particularly appropriate to Yeats's usage because his shepherd is singing of the universal disappearance of Arcady, and because Milton's reference to both Greek and Celtic mythologies is especially relevant to Yeats.

The loss of Arcady symbolizes a general loss of faith in truths once thought to reside in tales of old and the scientific discoveries of a more recent past. Now the kings of old are dead. Their glory has been reduced to "an idle word" in an "entangled story" and their "dusty deeds" are of no value in the modern world. Now too, scientific discoveries, once revered as revelations of absolute truth, seem dead, devoid of human truth:

> . . . Seek, then,
> No learning from the starry men,
> Who follow the optic glass
> The whirling ways of stars that pass--
> Seek, then, for this is also sooth,
> No word of theirs--the cold star-bane
> Has cloven and rent their hearts in twain,
> And dead is all their human truth.
> (CP, 8)

Milton had concerned himself with such knowledge which was the new preoccupation of the scientifically-minded seventeenth century. Indeed, Jeffares has suggested that Yeats borrowed the term "optic glass" from Milton's description of Gallileo's telescope in Book I of Paradise Lost:

> . . . the moon, whose Orb
> Through Optic Glass the Tuscan Artist views
> At ev'ning from the top of Fesole,
> Or in Valdarno, to descry new Lands,
> Rivers or Mountains in her spotty Globe.
> (PL I, 287-91; Jeffares, Comm, 5)

But in Milton's day modern science was in its infancy. Indeed, he was a curious observer of its birth as Hughes has noted with his remark that Milton had earlier recorded a probable visit to Gallileo in the Tuscan setting he described in these lines in Areopagitica (ed. Hughes, n. to I, 488; cf pp. 737-38).

The solution to this modern emptiness lies within the poet--"Go gather . . . / Some twisted, echo-harbouring shell"--and the deception inherent in that solution is withheld until the companion poem:

> Then he sang softly night the pearly rim;
> But the sad dweller by the sea-ways lone
> Changed all he sang to inarticulate moan
> Among her wildering whirls, forgetting him.
> (CP, 9)

But in "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" this grim possibility has yet to be realized. The shepherd is sheltered by his faith in the power of song and the creative potentiality of dreams. Present difficulties may be forgotten:

> . . . dream thou!
> For fair are poppies on the brow:
> Dream, dream, for this is also sooth.
> (CP, 8)

In addition to its Renaissance allusions this poem has an unmistakable late Victorian, Pre-Raphaelite, character. Indeed, Yeats's use of Milton here is undoubtedly related to the late nineteenth-century tendency to look to the past. Inversions, archaic words, such as "sooth," and repetition as in "dream, dream" are typical of the pre-1900 style which Yeats later set about to revise. In addition, the final section of the poem, which contains echoes of Lycidas and its tradition, including "Thyrsis" and "The Scholar Gypsy," is, in the end, slightly sentimental, even melodramatic:

> I must be gone: there is a grave
> Where daffodil and lily wave,
> . . . . . .
> And still I dream he treads the lawn,
> Walking ghostly in the dew.
> (CP, 8)

Yeats's rejection of both science and chivalry in favour of the heart and its truths is a specific response to the dialogue between the 'two voices' which dominated cultural debate throughout the nineteenth century. Since he continued to believe that truth came from the heart, this poem functions as a significant link between the modern solution which he pursued throughout his career and the problems which he inherited from his immediate predecessors.

As for the counter-truth of "The Sad Shepherd," it too has an equivalent in Milton's vision. Originally entitled "Miserrimus" after a Godwinian tale of a fiend, it provides a glimpse of the characteristics of the modern world with which the modern poet will have to deal which are by Milton's standards, as well as Godwin's and Yeats's, Satanic.[39] Stripped of the support provided by participation in an ordered universe, modern man

must be, like Milton's Satan, his own place. Accordingly, Daniel Harris discerns a parallel between Self's closing monologue in "Dialogue of Self and Soul" and Satan's claim in Book I of Paradise Lost:

> Contradicting . . . Soul's judgement on human criminality, Self asserts imagination's power to confer absolution upon experience. Though he shares neither Satan's glibness nor his characteristic evasions of responsibility, Self claims in effect that "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n". (PL, I, 254-55) (Harris, 211-12)

In a recent study of Milton's art in Paradise Lost, Arnold Stein detects an echo of Satan's evasions--as well as those of Adam after the fall--in Yeats's "Easter, 1916,"[40] suggesting that Milton's Satan

> . . . may remind us of the Yeats of "Easter 1916" who wrestles with his deep repugnance toward fanaticism and his personal dislike of certain fanatics he feels compelled to celebrate:
>
> What is it but nightfall?
> No, no, not night but death;
> Was it needless death after all?
> For England may keep faith
> For all that is done and said.
> (The Art of Presence, 73)

Stein excuses Yeats's evasions as "no more than the honest effort of one about to testify to a truth he may not understand or love but must acknowledge"; yet, it is this excuse which points to the modern relevance of Milton's Satan who, more than Adam at the brink of a new world, speaks to the reality with which modern man must cope.

"The Sad Shepherd" by itself, of course, can not carry the full burden of the Satanic characteristics of Yeats's view of modern man. It does, however, introduce the theme. The "inarticulate moan" which the shepherd receives back from the shell represents the bedevilment which blocks Yeats's quest for the right word to express the truths of his heart.

Similarly, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" acquires added significance when regarded in the light of Yeats's late career. Never the less, its several direct and idiosyncratic allusions to Milton point to Yeats's early recognition of Milton's place at the root of the poetic problem which he was then only beginning to define. And, while in succeeding years the specific pre-occuptions of the Victorians would recede into the past and he would drop the mannerisms of the nineties, Yeats would not lose sight of Milton's crucial importance to the problem that remained, nor to his role in the search for its solution.

In the years that followed Yeats's attitude to Milton became more complex. While on the one hand he admired Milton and both consciously and unconsciously emulated his achievement, on the other hand he was aware of the inadequacies of his philosophical system and was critical of aspects of his stylistic influence on English poetry. With respect to the latter, he anticipated both Pound and Eliot and was, in turn, influenced by their remarks, in an exchange of views that has been considered above. On the whole, however, the negative effect of his criticism was mitigated by the fact that it was strongest during his years of association with Pound and was limited to the stylistic concerns of that period which for Yeats, but not Pound and Eliot, were only one aspect of a broader interest in Milton. As well, much of Yeats's criticism was actually directed towards 'Miltonics,' a general, derogatory term which applies to characteristics which appeared in the work of succeeding generations of imitators as well as Milton himself. James Thorpe's description of these 'Miltonics' points to the shortcomings of much late-nineteenth-century poetry, including Yeats's, which were reviled by all who sought a modern style:

> . . . the employment of inflated and Latinized diction, idiom and syntactical structure, the fabrication of heavy, inflexible and unnatural formation of speech and rhythm, the reliance on pompous, magniloquent and meaningless sound.(cited by Sharma, 97)

Thorpe has thus provided a polite summary of what Pound in 1917 less moderately termed "the blight of the Miltonic or noise tradition," and has identified many of the problems Yeats set out to correct in his own poetry many years before his encounter with Pound.

Ironically, one of the poems which most clearly reflects Milton's influence on Yeats, stylistic and otherwise, is the tailpiece to Responsibilities which closes the volume most praised by Pound, in which he detected "a manifestly new note" in Yeats's work ("The Later Yeats," Poetry, IV, 65). While the poem has much that would recommend it to Pound, including its concluding image, it also reveals Yeats's fundamental affinity with Milton. William Carpenter locates its connection with Milton with his suggestion that when Yeats wished "to talk about a change in the nature of his poetic inspiration," he went back to Milton, "the one Renaissance writer who most seriously addressed the problem of inspiration in verse." He also detects a stylistic similarity to Milton which increases the effectiveness of Yeats's poem: "the entire sonnet contains only one sentence; and the grandeur of the opening lines, with the great separation between initial subject and verb, is that of an older, more rhetorical poetry" (disseration, 223-24). These genuinely 'Miltonic' characteristics which suggest that Yeats had direct contact with Milton's work, not merely that of his imitators, help to confirm Yeats's continuing and independent interest in Milton. And, while that interest is manifest in particular details of specific poems, it is also apparent in areas of

concern which offer proof of Yeats's more general kinship with Milton, as for example, in his elegies to Robert Gregory in the pastoral tradition of Astrophel and Lycidas.

Lycidas is now perhaps the best-known of all Milton's minor poems. As a pastoral elegy it is an important member of a tradition which Yeats inherited from Milton. That importance emerges more clearly in the light of Kermode's description of Yeats as "a great maker of elegies" (II, 36), while Yeats's poems on the death of Robert Gregory, especially "Shepherd and Goatherd" (CP, 159) and "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" (CP, 148), are themselves evidence of the strength of his elegiac tendencies. In both, Yeats obviously draws attention to his desire to connect his tributes to Gregory to the elegiac tradition of the Renaissance. In letters to Lady Gregory, he writes that he was "trying a poem in manner like one that Spenser wrote for Sir Philip Sidney" and, having completed "Shepherd and Goatherd," calls it "a pastoral, modelled on what Virgil wrote for some friend of his and on what Spenser wrote of Sidney" (L, 646, 647). In the second poem to be considered here, "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," he terms Gregory "our Sidney and our perfect man." "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" has also been compared with Ben Jonson's Cary-Morison Ode, and has been further related to the Renaissance elegy through Yeats's borrowing of the stanza from Cowley's "Ode on the Death of Mr. Wm. Harvey."[41] Connections with Lycidas are less obvious; yet because Lycidas stands as the elegy of the Renaissance which has yet to be repeated, comparison is both inevitable and necessary.

Those who have examined "Shepherd and Goatherd" with specific reference to Milton include Marion Witt, Frank Kermode and Daniel Harris. While Witt and Kermode, for different reasons, consider the poem a failure, Harris finds merit in it by examining it from a different perspective.

In the earliest of the three studies, Witt judges that the poem is not a true pastoral because Yeats fails "in what Empson called the pastoral process, 'putting the complex into the simple'" (113). In addition, she observes that the poem fails as an elegy because the concept of the life of the soul after death which is offered at the close of the Goatherd's song "without the consolation that Spenser or Milton offers, is coldly theoretical in the face of a fresh and terrible grief" (114).

Somewhat later, Frank Kermode emphasizes the way in which Yeats employed the pastoral convention. Like most who compare Yeats's poems and Lycidas, he focuses on the poet's relationship to his poem and its subject. He suggests that in "Shepherd and Goatherd" Yeats stood apart from the tradition established by Spenser as Milton and Shelley did not, since he was "less interested in the subtle laws of genre than in specific effects and achievements" (RI, 36). Thus, he used the pastoral convention as a

> device for ensuring an aristocratic distance between the poet and his subject, a possibility of achieving an interesting stoic coldness. . . . The best he could hope to achieve in the pastoral elegy would be this monumental apathy; or perhaps he also felt that he could bring together aristocrat and shepherd, Irish scholar-hero and Irish peasant-poet, by means of the pastoral artifice. But where Spenser could not escape frigidity, and Milton . . . could not escape the charge of it, Yeats could not succeed. (RI, 36)

But while Kermode sees Yeats's use of the pastoral convention in "Shepherd and Goatherd" as a failure, Daniel Harris judges otherwise:

> [Yeats] recognized, as no one much before his time could have, that the pastoral device was a fitting evocation of Gregory's character. You cannot imagine Milton, steeped in a still vital convention, wondering whether he could transform Edward King into a shepherd without loss of verisimilitude. (119)

For Harris the success of Yeats's elegy depends upon his ultra-revolutionary transformation of the pastoral convention into the convention of the country-house. Having established that "the pastoral is simultaneously 'literary' and actual," and that "conventionally pastoral shepherd and goatherd are also Gregory's tenants; their landscape . . . Coole Park," Harris asserts that "the pastoral is not a disguise." Gregory's "actual world was already mythic." That is, "the pastoral device was a fitting evocation of Gregory's character" and "the Goatherd's description of Gregory's art, although it alters his medium, is biographical before it is conventional" (119).

The emphasis on place which is evident throughout Harris's study is apparent in his analysis of the poem's consolation. For Harris, that consolation lies in the combined elegies of the Goatherd and Shepherd, but especially the Shepherd:

> Regarded separately, neither elegy renders the complex unity of Gregory's symbolic person. . . . Combined, however, these elegies offer an adequate statement of Gregory's central position in the universe. Because they are so interdependent, it is wrong to think the Goatherd's rapt vision the consolation which the poem extends. If that vision incorporates Yeats's own theory of the afterlife, the Goatherd's dramatic utterance nevertheless makes no claim to a 'prescriptive reality.' Yeats had no interest in comforting Lady Gregory with esoteric doctrine, nor did he follow Virgil in affirming order restored by apotheosis. Here as throughout his elegies (although not in A Vision) Yeats maintained that consolation is not contingent upon the soul's progress after death; it involves, rather, a recognition of who the person was. It is the Shepherd, in the end, who speaks Yeats's convictions. Acknowledging the interdependence of the elegies, he knows that private acts of mourning must become ceremony; the songs of 'the mountain and the valley,' the communal emblems of new understanding, must be brought to Coole. (123)

Accordingly, Harris finds that

> amidst the concluding images of restored order . . . the most telling emblem of regeneration is the proposed movement toward Coole, the source of communal allegiances and the Jonsonian shelter for art and the artist's heirs, the imaginative and natural symbols of Gregory's perpetuation in time. Not simply a tactful expression of sorrow, the movement virtually metamorphoses "Shepherd and Goatherd" into a country house poem. (125)

Here, of course, the burden of Renaissance influence shifts squarely to Jonson. Indeed, the emphasis on place which emerges from Harris's analysis helps to explain why a reading of Lycidas in conjunction with Yeats's poems on the death of Robert Gregory is chiefly valuable for the contrasts which emerge. It confirms that the modernity of the consolation offered by Yeats's poems is distinguished by the fact that the living world offers the only consolation that is acceptable to moderns, in contrast to the consolation derived from King's translation into the "Genius of the shore" in Lycidas which is a transformation of place of a wholly different kind.

In a study of "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," cited approvingly by Daniel Harris, Marjorie Perloff suggests that Yeats succeeded in writing "one of the great elegies in English because he discern[ed] the possibilities of adapting the conventional form to his own purpose" ("The Consolation Theme," MLQ, 321). She asserts that as a modern who "no longer believes in immortality in an orthodox sense" Yeats had to find a different kind of consolation from that which had satisfied Milton and Shelley. Accordingly she suggests that the consolation in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" comes from the life that is sustained within its dramatic structure:

the speaker or persona of the poem is consistently presented as one who has survived the turmoil and temptations of the fledgling artist to achieve the Unity of Being denied to Robert Gregory in his lifetime. ("The Consolation Theme . . .," MLQ, XXVII (1966), 307)

Finally, in order to emphasize the contrast between Yeats's adaptation of the consolation theme and the more orthodox consolation that is offered by Milton's poem, Perloff prefaces her study with a quotation from Lycidas:

> Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
> For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead. . . .
> (306)

Although Marion Witt detects a verbal parallel between the close of stanza one, "All, all are in my thoughts tonight being dead," and Milton's "For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime" (116), most other commentators relate "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" to Lycidas with respect to the manner in which the poet is related to his subject. Again, a consensus points to a contrast between Milton's poem and Yeats's which suggests that Yeats used the Renaissance convention of the pastoral elegy for his own, specifically modern, purpose.

Harold Bloom, for example, argues that

> What is weakest in the poem is Gregory himself, more an Edward King than a Sidney. This would not have mattered if Gregory counted for as little in the poem as King does in Lycidas, but unfortunately he does count for more. What saves the poem is that Yeats's career matters more to it than Gregory's, a saving formula strenuously employed by Milton and emulated by Shelley in Adonais. (193)

With more admiration for Yeats's achievement, Robert Snukal makes a similar point:

> . . . the whole force of Milton's poem reaches us through what is said about King. Milton assumes the persona of the humble swain, and disappears into the persona. The persona itself stays hidden through most of the poem. Now, the persona Yeats adopts in the elegy entitled "In Memory of Robert Gregory" is as much a persona as Milton's swain, or the shepherd and goatherd that Yeats creates in another poem to speak of Gregory. But Yeats's persona remains at the centre of the poem, and becomes thematically as important as Gregory. That is, what is central to the poem is not so much Major Gregory as the changing mood of the persona, and the fact that the persona informs us from the beginning that the point of his thinking about Gregory is to induce that change of mood in himself. (149)

Thus, Snukal's somewhat complicated analysis points to Perloff's study, as does Amy G. Stock's observation that

> Thyrsis, Adonais, Lycidas: each is full of the poet's grief for his times or for the fate of poets or his own fate; the sorrow is real but the dead friend dissolves into a symbol of sorrow. Yeats maintains his aristocratic composure; he will not break down in public, only he laments that such a man 'could share in that discourtesy of death.' (119)

That is, Stock, too, discerns that the success of "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" is derived from the continuity with life which is maintained by the determination to retain his aristocratic composure.

In all, Milton remained at the centre of Yeats's endeavour, as the poet whose radical strategies had to be confronted before others could match their significance in English literary tradition. Accordingly, at almost every turn Yeats not only worked to meet those strategies, but also to match the creative impulse which stood behind them. Throughout his career he exploited a cross-section of Milton's works, including "Arcades," "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Lycidas and Paradise Lost. In every case, a counter-truth emerged which took Yeats yet another step closer to the expression of the modern which he sought. In the end, Milton's importance to Yeats supersedes but does not invalidate both Jonson's and Donne's, because it reveals the essential

importance to Yeats of the Renaissance as a whole. Because of the nature of his achievement, Milton's importance to Yeats is the definitive illustration of the centrality of the Renaissance in Yeats's work. As well, because of the significance of Milton's place in Yeats's scheme of history, Yeats's continuing interest in Milton, which makes his work seem an ongoing response to the challenge of Milton's achievement, affirms his continuing recognition of the need to assume his own place in history so that, in its turn, his own work may have future relevance.

Milton's long-standing importance to Yeats is perhaps best illustrated in Yeats's final poems, especially "News for the Delphic Oracle," written more than fifty years after "The Song of the Happy Shepherd." Before pursuing an extended comparison between "News for the Delphic Oracle" and Milton's Nativity Ode, it is helpful to recall that Yeats had inscribed his copy of Milton's Works with the opening lines of "News" and that his Nativity Ode had occupied an important place in Yeats's scheme of history since the composition of A Vision in 1925:

> I see in Milton, who is characteristic of the moment when the first violence of the gyre has begun to sink, an attempted return to the synthesis of the Camera della Segnatura and the Sistine Chapel. It is an attempt made too late that, amid all the music and magnificence of the still violent gyre, gives him his unreality and his cold rhetoric. The two elements have fallen apart in the hymn "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," the one is sacred, the other profane; his classical mythology is an artificial ornament; whereas no great Italian artist from 1450 to the sack of Rome saw any difference between them, and when the difference came, as it did with Titian, it was God and the Angels that seemed artificial. (AV(B), 294-95. Cf. AV(A), 205)

In "News for the Delphic Oracle," as elsewhere, Yeats's use of Milton is best revealed through contrasts which are marked by the same tone of irreverence and self-mockery which characterized the dialogue of Robartes and Aherne outside the tower in "Phases of the Moon." Indeed, Daniel Harris regards the reworking of Milton's Nativity Ode in "News for the Delphic Oracle" as Yeats's "great joke" on the expectations of earlier generations. In his words, that joke

> is to substitute the lecherous earthly Pan for Milton's heavenly Pan, the Virgilian Christ, with his superbly tolerable music; and in place of the 'smiling Infancy' of the baby Christ Yeats has put the foetal Achilles. The oracle's vision of the blessèd isles, as explained in 'The Delphic Oracle upon Plotinus' and its source in Porphyry, is driven out by the sexuality of Pan's nymphs and satyrs; I believe that 'News for the Delphic Oracle' is a triumphant renunciation of the blessèd isles in favour of generative life. (Myth Against Myth, 122-23)

Albright also discerns Milton's presence behind other aspects of Yeats's poems. Commenting that Yeats's inscription of the first few lines of "News for the Delphic Oracle" in the back of his copy of Milton "suggests that Milton had something to do with the poem," Albright observes

> There is a definite (though difficult to define) Miltonic feeling about the beginning of the poem, probably due to its comfortable, diffuse love, the combination of Christian and classical references, the great unison of its landscape. (121)

He suggests that the first four lines of Yeats's poem derive from stanza V of Milton's hymn; that the joke implied in Yeats's title is solved in stanza XIX ("The oracles are dumb . . ."); that while Thetis also appears in Milton as a minor character in "In Quintum Novembris" and "Comus" more of Yeats's third stanza is probably derived from stanza XX;[42] and finally, that while a 'choir of love' harped "unexpressive" (i.e. inexpressible) notes to Heaven at at least two points in Milton's ode, Yeats on the other hand provided "a genuinely unexpressive choir" (122-24). The last three points illustrate how Yeats used the Renaissance as the opposite to the modern to express a distinctly modern meaning. In Milton's Ode, the Delphic oracle is silenced by the onset of the Christian era. By contrast, Yeats's poem marks the end of that era. It, too, heralds an imminent birth, but there, the oracles must be awakened to greet the new age of paganism which is at hand. Describing Yeats's third stanza, Albright makes a similar point, that Yeats's use of the Renaissance was the product of his tendency to see it as the opposite to the modern:

> Yeats, reversing every thing, lets the nymph Thetis destroy the mighty harmony of the waters and the wind which Milton identifies with Christ's reign of peace; Homer was Yeats's example, and his unchristened heart. (123)

Other details of Yeats's poem also indicate a deliberate counterpointing of Milton's ode. The word "golden" in the opening line evokes the "age of gold" to which Milton refers in stanza XIV of his hymn:

> For if such holy Song
> Enwrap our fancy long,
> Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold.
> (ed. Hughes, 46, ll. 133-35)

Yeats, too, has a song of love, but his music heralds a pagan, sensual love--"Niamh leant and sighed / By Oisin on the grass" (CP, 376). Moreover, his poem moves from 'peace' (in truth, a state more like weariness) to chaos and confusion, in contrast to Milton's, which progresses from the silence which accompanies the announcement of Christ's birth, through the discordant routing of the classical deities, to the peaceful harmony of the Christmas scene. But while Yeats connects his poem to the story of the nativity, and hence to the events of Milton's poem, he chooses to refer to the slaughter of the Innocents, the most violent episode in the biblical story. His tone is exultant:

> Straddling each a dolphin's back
> And steadied by a fin,
> Those Innocents re-live their death,
> Their wounds open again.
> The ecstatic waters laugh because
> Their cries are sweet and strange.
> (CP, 376)

Indeed, the Innocents are triumphant, they need no Christian redeemer. They rejoice in reliving their deaths, re-opening their wounds. Thus, like Christ's, their wounds are perpetually open, but unlike Christ himself, they anticipate no peaceful kingdom, and seem doomed to perpetual activity--"their ancestral patterns dance" (CP, 376). Yeats has made the dolphin the instrument of deliverance. Jeffares, Henn and Rajan are among those who point to possible sources for Yeats's references to the dolphins here as well as in "Byzantium." Rajan's suggestion that the "common reader might remember Lycidas and the use of the dolphin by

Elizabethan writers to symbolize that which is both in and out of its element" (144) is particularly relevant in view of the context of "News" and of the fact that Yeats was clearly responding to Milton throughout the poem. While the dolphin is clearly associated with the violence of this world--"the dolphin's mire and blood"; "That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea"--in "Byzantium" (CP, 281) in "News for the Delphic Oracle," the dolphins participate in a much cruder and more brutal violence which does not invite fascination--"The brute dolphins plunge / Until . . . / . . . / . . . / they pitch their burdens off" (CP, 377). Their rough deliverance is in marked contrast to the gentle protection from the "sounding seas" that is offered in Lycidas--"O ye Dolphins, waft the hapless youth" (ed. Hughes, 124, l. 164). There, the dolphins provide a haven and a safe journey towards apotheosis, while in Yeats's poem they offer a rough voyage to a questionable destination. The particular contrast between the nature and character of Yeats's dolphins and their context, and that of Milton's in Lycidas, strengthens the possibility that Yeats had used it in conjunction with the Nativity Ode in the composition of "News."

Finally, in the third and last section of the poem, Yeats reveals that he also brings news of birth, but that he is announcing the re-birth of a pagan dispensation. The new babe will come from Pan's cavern, Pan being the classical guardian of the flocks and hence the pagan equivalent of Christ. The music that heralds the new birth is not only "unexpressive," in the modern sense, but is also "intolerable." This new birth does not signal harmony, but discord, the classical legacy of Thetis through Achilles.

Thus, Yeats's poem, while it has a triple structure, does not imitate the tonal pattern of Milton's Ode, with its concluding return to peace. Instead, Yeats offers a triple crescendo, each one louder. The third section ends with violent copulation, complete surrender to the senses--"Love has blinded him . . . / But Thetis' belly listens"--accompanied by raucous sound--"Intolerable music falls" (CP, 377). The language of this section, which is anticipated in the last half of the middle section, may be compared with the language used by Milton to describe the routing of the pagan gods--"the brutish gods of Nile" (l. 211); "Nor is Osiris seen / . . . / Trampling the unshow'r'd Grass with lowings loud" (ll. 213-15). Here, as elsewhere, Yeats repudiates neither Milton's message nor his method. Rather, he uses both to champion Milton's enemy.

"News for the Delphic Oracle" is one of Yeats's last poems. Its allusions are broader and richer in significance than this study has been able to show. It has been studied by others, including F. A. C. Wilson and Daniel Albright.[43] Albright, in particular, examines the poem at some length, in the context of Yeats's whole career. Picking up the reference to Niamh and Oisin in the opening section, he links the poem as a whole to Yeats's early "Wandering of Oisin." But the significant point for this study, which Albright does not make, is that, at the end of his career, when it was time to choose a model for a poem that would not only reach back to his early career but would also look forward to his vision of the future, Yeats settled on the example offered by Milton. Through associations with Milton's Ode which embraces (or attempts to embrace) the overtaking of the profane by the sacred, paganism by Christianity, Yeats was able to survey a vast span of time, to turn back the achievement

of the Renaissance and unfold the coming of a new profanity.

Yet it is not quite accurate to refer to Milton's poem as Yeats's 'model.' More properly, it served him as a mask. By expressing what the modern age was not, it provided counter-truths to the truths about the modern age which Yeats wished to communicate but could do so only in terms which no longer had validity. Indeed, "News for the Delphic Oracle" was possible because of the prior existence of its sources, including Milton's "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," and, it is because of the manner in which Yeats used those sources that they both connect his age to the past and at the same time declare its distinction.

"News for the Delphic Oracle" is a more complete expression of Yeats's earlier announcement that the arts are about to re-state a traditional morality. Although the brutal copulation described in its closing lines heralds a renewal of the life which was lost with the maturing of the Renaissance, it also ensures that that life will bear little trace of the "intellectual innocence" which had characterized life at Urbino. More likely, as "News for the Delphic Oracle" certainly suggests, the "delight . . . in the mere spectacle of the world" which marked that innocence will be replaced by horror and repulsion. The "traditional morality" that is at hand will be quite new, related to its earlier counterpart only through its commitment to life which is as yet mere energy awaiting the intervention of the thirteenth cone.

Yeats's scheme of history must be fulfilled. The Renaissance, including the age of Milton, has come and gone. Its value now lies in its

contribution to an understanding of the present and future. Thus, Milton's precedent was of special importance to Yeats, because he spoke to Yeats as a fellow-poet concerned about the plight of the individual who must define himself in a cosmic setting and because his achievement helped Yeats to shadow forth truths about to be unveiled.

AFTERWORD

> . . . it remains for some greater time, living once more in passionate reverie, to create a *King Lear*, a *Divine Comedy*, vast worlds moulded by their own weight like drops of water.
>
> "Art and Ideas," 1913

Yeats's late comment that "learning to think poetically is much the same as believing in a scheme of the world" points to the importance of "vast worlds" in his life and work. In both, he needed the "vast sentiments and generalizations supported by traditions" to which he refers in his letter to Dorothy Wellesley, while his efforts ultimately produced a "phantasmagoria" like that which he describes in "A General Introduction for My work."

In general, the process of learning to think poetically may be described as a search for ways to organize experience. For Yeats in particular, it resulted in the creation of two philosophies: what he calls in a late letter to Ethel Mannin, a "public philosophy," his *Vision*; and, a private philosophy, "material dealing with the individual mind" (*L*, 916). Both are related. As for their function, Yeats's communicators said that they had come to give "metaphors for poetry," while Yeats himself confessed that he regarded the historical periods of his system as "stylistic arrangements of experience" which helped him "to hold in a single thought reality and justice" (25).

The Renaissance played a crucial role in Yeats's development as a poet. Techniques learned from its masters helped him to achieve a distinctly modern style that remains recognizably traditional. As a time when the creation of vast worlds still seems to have been possible, the Renaissance was stabilized by a general belief in a correspondent world-view in which all things were linked. Unity of Being was not an ideal shaped by its unattainability and all thought was potentially poetic. The Renaissance thus offered its own poets advantages not available to moderns, while its world-view continued to serve as a model for those in quest of coherence and integrity. As an artifice of Yeats's imagination, the Renaissance was perhaps the most important of all his "arrangements of experience," with a shape and structure of its own as well as a place in a larger, more complex historical scheme. Moreover, because his Renaissance was a mask whose primary function was the definition of its anti-mask, the ability to see it as a distinct entity, a vast world embracing a complete tradition, made it possible for Yeats not only to respond to the Renaissance as a commentary on our own time but to use our time in its turn, as a means of access to another historical period.

In their particulars, that mask and its anti-mask, the modern, were shaped by Yeats's encounters with individual Renaissance figures, the special concern of this study having been those of the later or seventeenth-century English Renaissance. Ben Jonson, for example, has much to teach about literary forms and conventions. Yet what Yeats primarily learned from his encounter with Jonson was the extent to which man affirms himself through

his relationships with the social and natural order. Forms and conventions derive their significance from men and must in turn be understood by them. More specifically, Yeats's adaptation of Jonson's achievement illustrates the premise that the structures which man makes to convey his meaning--literary conventions, houses, social arrangements--are all based upon an exchange between man and nature--otherwise form and life, mind and body, mental organization and physical energy. Ideally, that exchange should be complete, as in Shakespeare's day when "the two great energies of the world . . . penetrated each other" (E, 258) and a unity like that described in Yeats's favourite definition of his ideal seemed possible: when beauty seemed like a perfectly proportioned human body and all the strings murmured when a single one was touched.

In the reality of the modern age, that exchange can never be complete. The correspondence between energy and counter-energy has been lost. What emerges most strikingly from Yeats's encounter with Jonson is the strength of nature as a counter-energy which exposes the inadequacy of human order. That counter-energy is thus a major characteristic of the modern. It distinguishes anti-mask from mask and will determine the character of the future. Although the ancestral houses are gone their trees remain. Meanwhile, saplings rooted among broken stone await man's rediscovery of his meaning.

Even more threatening than the destruction of previous structures of meaning is the deterioration of man's ability to either sustain current structures or to establish new ones. That failure cuts at the heart of humanist tradition, leaving Homer's horse riderless and thus, setting the stage for a new and terrible dispensation, for the coming of

a rough beast and whatever else the thirteenth cone will bring.

Meanwhile, Milton's example also taught Yeats about the containment of energy. In many respects, Paradise Lost may be regarded as a dramatization of the inadequacy of form. Disobedience, for example, is a revolt against form, a refusal to be constrained; rebellion is liberation. The garden is an ordered world unto itself; that which is all before it, as yet unstructured in mortal eyes, awaits a shaping hand. With its treatment of Satan's exile and the expulsion of Adam and Eve, Milton's poem is, in fact, an exploration of what now seems a very modern preference for process, for the challenge of confrontation.

The Jonsonian sense of order provokes Yeats into affirming the absolescence or even the irrelevance of traditional structures of order to our time. Perhaps the Miltonic marshalling of contraries leads Yeats into explaining the forces by which order is challenged and overturned. Moreover, Milton's practice of depicting man on the threshold of new understandings gives his work a special relevance for Yeats. His Nativity Ode, for example, serves as a key to the message of "News for the Delphic Oracle." Again, Yeats's adaptation of a Renaissance precedent is also an implicit judgement of the quality of the modern situation. The era inaugurated by the child born to Thetis will be marked by violence not peace, fear rather than consolation.

Milton's work was also important to Yeats for its contribution to his understanding of his personal ideal. For reasons quite apart from his reference to Dante in his description of Unity of Being in Autobiographies,

that ideal is clearly rooted in Renaissance thought--in Donne's "body thought" and Jonson's "vertues, shining through your shapes" as well as in Milton's Adam and in the figure of Truth from Areopagitica. And although Donne depicts the consequences of the absence of the perfect figure from the world in his Anniversaries, those consequences are most vividly dramatized in Paradise Lost through an assault on the ideal which acquires significance because that assault is victorious in the end.

In this matter, too, the Yeatsean engagement with the Renaissance led to differentiations which register his judgement of the modern. Michelangelo's, and hence Milton's, Adam is radically revised in what he signifies. What was once a symbol of absolute perfection is now the token of a profane perfection. Such differences are particularly important because they reside in the artist's audience and not in the work of art itself. They suggest that Yeats's judgements may sometimes be best understood if regarded as pointing not so much to repudiations as to debasements. A line of debasement can be charted for instance in the "progression" from 'thinking of the body' through 'Unity of Being' to Adam as the 'profane perfection of mankind' in "Under Ben Bulben." Globe-trotting madam belongs with the sciolists, pickpockets and all others whom the old man seeks to exclude from prospective performances of Death of Cuchulain.

It is thus not merely a debasement of subject matter which the modern artist must face, it is also, and perhaps more seriously, the deterioration of his audience.

Here again, the Renaissance set Yeats's standard as he conceived that he provided its artists with an ideal audience, one which shared the same culture and expected and therefore received the best from its poets and playwrights. Again Yeats used an ideal derived from the Renaissance to explore a modern problem, on this occasion two problems almost universally shared by modern artists: intellectual isolation and social alienation Paradoxically, he exposed both through an almost total engagement with the past especially the Renaissance. And while the vast world which Yeats made of the Renaissance helped him to define what he needed, its construction also revealed that much remained to be discerned. The Renaissance ultimately became the "manifold illusion" of Ribh's final poem:

> Civilization is hooped together, brought
> Under a rule, under the semblance of peace
> By manifold illusion.

What remains, the counter-truth, points to the fundamental nature of the reality which Yeats wished to explore:

> . . . but man's life is thought
> Ravening through century after century,
> Ravening, raging and uprooting that he may come
> Into the desolation of reality.
> (CP, 333)

For Yeats, that ravening meant an exploration of himself through self-dramatization, through the creation of a series of figures, including Crazy Jane and Ribh, who were but aspects of himself.

In that ravening, Donne was Yeats's most helpful guide, offering him the precedent of a poet adopting a seemingly endless succession of masks. Such self-dramatization allowed Donne to 'try on' and explore a variety of roles within the same apparently stable and highly structured world which supported Jonson and Milton. It was a world threatened but not yet rendered untenable by emerging complexities and contradictions. Elizabeth Drury's translation is successful. She ascends to an ideal blessedness in heaven and Donne can quite confidently draw upon his audience's belief in that state to validate her accomplishment.

Yeats, on the other hand, had no means of appealing to such a belief. When he advised Monk Gibbon that "learning to think poetically was much the same as believing in a scheme of the world" he set himself a double task: creating such a scheme, then believing it. The problem of belief in the modern world has been considered only briefly in this study, and can only be mentioned in passing here to distinguish between the assumptions which may be made about Yeats and his Renaissance predecessors. While all that they accomplished may be fitted into the correspondent world-view mentioned at the outset of these remarks, Yeats's achievement must stand on its own. It must be its own justification and "moulded by its own weight" can inspire and sustain only to the extent that its truth can be validated by experience. Thus, when Yeats borrowed Donne's posturing, his intellectualizing, his wit, that borrowing was motivated by a need unknown in the Renaissance, to explore the self not in relation to an external reality that was traditionally sanctioned but as an ordering nucleus through which the external world was to be encountered and shaped.

In his late letter to Ethel Mannin, where he writes of the importance of his philosophies, Yeats identifies certain sensuous images whose dissolution is true death:

> In my own philosophy the sensuous image is changed from time to time at predestined moments. . . . One sensuous image leads to another because they are never analysed. At The Critical Moment they are dissolved by analysis and we enter by free will pure unified experience. When all the sensuous images are dissolved we meet true death. . . . This idea of death suggests to me Blake's design . . . of the soul and body embracing. All men with subjective natures move towards a possible ecstasy, all with objective natures towards a possible wisdom. (L, 917)

Whether Yeats ever succeeded in divesting himself of his sensuous images is not clear. Certainly in late poems, like "High Talk" and "The Circus Animals' Desertion," he admits to his deliberate yet temporary use of his own fictions, providing an analysis of his poetic images which reduces them to their origins.

> Those masterful images because complete
> Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?
> A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
> Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
> Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
> Who keeps the till.
>
> (CP, 392)

Even in a non-Yeatsean sense, however, Yeats's final poems are less sensuous than earlier ones, marked by images of the retreat of creativity and passion into an inscrutable darkness in anticipation of an unfashionable gyre. At the end of his career Yeats's Renaissance emerges as the epitome of an entire civilization, a Great Moment whose time has passed. He anticipates a grim future, not a time of passionate reverie. Vast

worlds such as those he looks for may never be created again. The last romantic has come and as his life ebbs, the swan is adrift on a darkening flood.

Ultimately Yeats's encounter with the Renaissance was not really a matter of influence. It was rather the discovery and declaration of a relationship, the laying claim to an inheritance. Receipt of that inheritance was a paradoxical liberation from a past to which the present remains inextricably bound. It means that the Renaissance must be declared a part of Yeats and that his achievement cannot be accurately assessed without prior recognition of its place. In a word, learning to think poetically was more complex than first appeared. Acquisition of the Renaissance was for Yeats a process of self-discovery and its definition, a definition of the self.

NOTES

PART A: Yeats and Jonson

[1] Cited by S. B. Bushrui, Yeats's Verse Plays: The Revisions, 1900-1910 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 208.

[2] See Allt, "Lady Gregory and Yeats's Cult of Aristocracy," Irish Writing, Special No. 31 (Summer 1955), 19-23; Bloom, Yeats (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 168-77; Bushrui, 208; Davie, "Yeats, the Master of a Trade," in The Integrity of Yeats, ed. Denis Donoghue, (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1967), 59-70 and "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," in HG, 73-87; Whitaker, Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 158.

[3] See Perloff, "'Another Emblem There': Theme and Convention in Yeats's 'Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931,'" JEGP, 69 (1970), 223; Rajan, "Yeats and the Renaissance," Mosaic, IV (Summer 1972), 114; and Tomlinson, "Yeats and the Practising Poet," in HG, 1-7.

[4] See Henn, LT, 321. Cf. Mulryne's note.

[5] See Appendices II, III and IV.

[6] For information regarding the contents of Yeats's library, supplied by Anne Yeats, April 1975, see Appendix I.

[7] Miss Yeats notes that "the editor has copied out Herrick's 'Prayer to Ben Jonson' and put his signature below." Lines quoted in this study have been cited from Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry, ed. A. M. Witherspoon and Frank J. Warnke (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), 819.

[8] Cited from Dixon's edition.

[9] Yeats's letter concludes with the remark: "I have been dipping into Clarendon" (L, 479). Yeats may well be referring to the Earl of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, 7 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1849) which was reissued in 1888. Clarendon's history is a logical source for Yeats of information about the seventeenth century. His desire to find out more about the period is an indication, not merely of his interest in the period, but also, of his early awareness of its importance.

[10] The relationship between Yeats and Craig is considered in recent studies, including James W. Flannery's W. B. Yeats and the Idea of a Theatre (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), especially 245-78. See also Flannery's article, "W. B. Yeats, Gordon Craig and the Visual Arts of the Theatre," Yeats and the Theatre, ed. Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds, Yeats Studies Series (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975), 82-108.

[11] See Congreve's Letter to John Dennis, 10 July 1695 in William Congreve, Letters and Documents, Collected and Edited by John C. Hodges (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), 176-85. Also cited by Donoghue (Memoirs, 242, n. 2). See also, Yeats's remarks in entry 208, Memoirs, 242.

[12] See The Complete Plays of John M. Synge (New York: Vintage Books, 1960) [177]. Douglas Duncan examines the relationship between Synge and Jonson in some detail in an article entitled "Synge and Jonson," in A Centenary Tribute to John Millington Synge: 1871-1909, ed. S. B. Bushrui (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972), 205-18. He points out that there are two references to Jonson in the Oxford edition of Synge's plays: in a superseded draft of the Preface to The Playboy (January 1907), and this reference in the Preface to The Tinker's Weddding ("Synge and Jonson," 205-06). Bushrui also observes that Synge, like Yeats, read and admired Jonson (Yeats's Verse Plays, 208, n. 119) and suggests that "Synge's 'hunger for harsh facts, for ugly surprising things, for all that defies our hope' . . . whetted Yeats's hunger for the 'savage imagination' which he found and admired in Ben Jonson" ("Synge and Yeats," in A Centenary Tribute, ed. Bushrui, 194).

[13] Yeats may have borrowed the word "sciolists" from Jonson who similarly condemned "Scioli," or "Smatterers" in his Timber; or Discoveries: "Now, there are certain Scioli or smatterers, that are busie in the skirts and out-sides of Learning, and have scarce any thing of solide literature to commend them. They may have some edging, or trimming of a schollar, a welt, or so: but it is no more"(231-35).

[14] See Howard B. Norland's Introduction to the modern re-issue of Swinburne's Study of Ben Jonson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), viii. Swinburne's study was first available to Yeats when it was published as four articles in two periodicals: Part I in the Nineteenth Century, 603-16 (April) and 693-715 (May); and Parts II and III in the Fortnightly Review, L (o.s.) (1888), 23-88 (July) and 425-47 (October). It was finally published as a book by Chatto and Windus in 1889. For further textual information see Norland's Introduction (xxv-xxvi).

[15] Yeats's spelling of this title as 'Underwoods' or 'Under-woods' is not an error. Both appeared in the Folio (1640) while Gifford has Underwoods: Consisting of Divers Poems. It is designated 'The Under-wood' throughout this study in conformity with G. B. Johnston's edition of Poems.

[16] Note that both Bloom and McAlindon refer to Landor as well as Jonson. Bloom's remark continues ". . . [in the tradition of Jonson and of Landor], rather than of the somewhat allied line of Donne," and he recalls the concluding line of "To a Young Beauty" where Yeats would "dine at journey's end / With Landor and with Donne" (CP, 157). Bloom thus appears to regard this line as an indirect acknowledgement of Jonson's influence, via Landor, on Yeats. See further discussion in Part B below.

[17] Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden in Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1947), I, 143, ll. 387-88. Yeats appears to have written drafts in his Journal.

[18] "Momentary Thoughts" included: "The Fascination of What's Difficult," "Drinking Song," "The Coming of Wisdom with Time," "To a Poet who would have me Praise certain Bad Poets, Imitators of His and Mine," "The Mask," "Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation," "These are the Clouds," "At Galway Races," "A Friend's Illness," "All Things can Tempt me" and "Brown Penny." See Jeffares, Comm, 100-14.

[19] Nichol's examples include Jonson's "To Mrs. Philip Sidney" (Epigramme CXIII, H & S, VIII, 73-74) ("For Cupid . . ."); "Epode" (The Forrest XI, H & S, VIII, 110) ("The thing, they here calle loue, is blinde Desire / Arm'd with bow, shafts, and fire"); and Yeats's "Why should not Old Men be Mad" (CP, 388) ("A Helen of a social welfare dream, / Climb on a wagonette to scream").

[20] Jeffares' date. More recently (1972) Denis Donoghue has dated the prose draft (entries 180 and 181 in Journal) August 7 [1909]. The poem was first published 1910.

[21] See Memoirs, 269-71, for Yeats's record of this dispute. Also Donoghue's notes (269) are most helpful. Moore's article appeared in English Review, XVI, 167-80 and 350-64 (see Donoghue's n. 2).

[22] See Yeats's remark, "I wrote this ["Upon a House . . ."] on hearing the results of reductions of rent made by the courts." and Donoghue's subsequent note (Memoirs, 226 and n. 1).

[23] The poem was first known as "To a Country House in Time of Change" in McClure's Magazine (December 1910). Its title was altered to "Upon a Threatened House" in the Green Helmet volumes of 1910 and 1911, where it was included in the sub-section, "Momentary Thoughts." Its present title first appeared in The Green Helmet and Other Poems, 1912 (Jeffares, Comm, 109; VE, 264).

[24] However, while it is tempting to insist on these parallels one difficulty arises--the ode was not acknowledged as Jonson's until it was attributed to him by W. D. Briggs, The Athenaeum, 13 June 1914. It was later accepted as genuine by Herford and Simpson (XI, 163. See also G. B. Johnston's note, Poems, 346). These parallels are thus suspect unless Yeats knew of the ode before Briggs established its authorship. Certainly in the light of his contemporary interest in Jonson, Yeats would have attended to Brigg's discovery of yet another poem by Jonson with which he could identify. None the less, Harris's original suggestion that "break the teeth of time" may be an echo of Jonson's "stryke the ear of tyme" is still valid since the phrase also appears in the Apologetical Dialogue to Poetaster (l. 229), just before the lines echoed in the Closing Rhyme to Responsibilities (ll. 238-39).

[25] See McAlindon's n. 34 for a brief summary of parallels between Cowley's and Jonson's odes as well as his acknowledgement of Saintsbury's judgement that "Cowley's lyrics 'are often quite Jonsonian'" from A Short History of English Literature (London, 1898), 414.

[26] Parkinson cites the draft from an otherwise unpublished MS:

Describe house in first stanza. Here Synge came, Hugh Lane, Shaw Taylor, many names. I too in my timid youth. Coming and going like migratory birds. Then address the swallows fluttering in their dream like circles. Speak of the rarity of the circumstances that bring together such concords of men. Each man more than himself through whom an unknown life speaks. A circle ever returning into itself.

He then continues, to trace Yeats's general use of prose drafts (The Later Poetry, 80 and 81-82).

[27] See later discussions elsewhere in this study. Consideration of such metaphysical questions is not characteristic of Ben Jonson's work. The manner in which Yeats used the conventions of the country house genre in this context points to the difference between his interests and the precedent offered by Jonson, and, helps to explain his turning to other Renaissance figures.

PART B: Yeats and Donne

[1] Yeats's letter is mentioned by Henn in LT, 20, 40, 49 and 121; "The Accent of Yeats's Last Poems" in Vision and Revision, ed. Stallworthy, 128-29; and "Green Helmet and Responsibilities" in HG, 38; by Chatterjee in The Poetry of W. B. Yeats (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1962), 16 and 29; by Unterecker in A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats (New York: The Noonday Press, 1959), 136; by Engelberg in The Vast Design (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 91; by Harris in Yeats: Coole Park and Ballylee, 71 and by William Carpenter, "The Green Helmet Poems and Yeats's Myth of the Renaissance," MP, LXVII (1969), 58 and dissertation, 89-90, 112.

[2] See Hone, 302; Henn, LT, 261-62; Rajan, W. B. Yeats: A Critical Introduction (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1965), 110; and Stallworthy, Introduction to Vision and Revision, 13.

[3] See Koch, W. B. Yeats: The Tragic Phase (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), 51-52; Davie, "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," in HG, 80-81; and Henn, "The Rhetoric of Yeats," in In Excited Reverie, ed. A. N. Jeffares and K. G. W. Cross (London: Macmillan, 1965), 102.

[4] See Tillotson, "Donne's Poetry in the Nineteenth Century (1800-72)" in Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies Presented to Frank Percy Wilson in Honour of his Seventieth Birthday, ed. Herbert Davis and Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 306-26. Duncan's Chapter IV first appeared in "The Revival of Metaphysical Poetry, 1872-1912," PMLA, LXVIII, 4 (September 1953), 658-71.

[5] See Edward Le Comte, Grace to a Witty Sinner (New York: Walker and Co., 1965), 246-47; Julian Lovelock, ed. Donne: Songs and Sonets (London: Macmillan, 1973), 25, quoted, 99; Una Nelly, The Poet Donne: A Study in his Dialectic Method (Cork: University Press, 1969), 67; and, A. J. Smith, Introduction to John Donne: Essays in Celebration, ed. A. J. Smith (London: Methuen, 1972), 13 and 26.

[6] Kermode's article first appeared in Kenyon Review, 19 (1957), 169-94 and is reprinted in Essential Articles for the study of John Donne's Poetry, ed. John R. Roberts (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1975), 66-82.

[7] See Louis Martz, "Donne and the Meditative Tradition," in Essential Articles, ed. Roberts, 143. This article is reprinted from Thought, 34 (1959), 269-78.

[8] See Appendix VI.

[9] See Appendix V.

[10] Information regarding Yeats's long acquaintance with Grierson is available in Duncan's study (Revival, 131). In addition, Duncan documents Grierson's interest in Donne which also began in the nineties. See Chapter VI and especially n. 4 to p. 114 (Revival, 217).

[11] It must be noted, however, that passion was one of the things which Yeats had long sought in his work. He had, for example, praised Coole as a house where "passion and precision have been one" in "Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation" (CP, 106), written in 1909 (Donoghue's date. Cf. Memoirs, 225-26). Yeats's poem is considered in some detail in Part A of this study.

[12] Yeats's remark, "That word, which I had not thought of myself, is a word I want," appears in a letter to Dorothy Wellesley, 24 May 1938 (L, 908-09). MacLeish's article, "Public Speech and Private Speech in Poetry" was published in the Yale Review, XXVII (Spring 1938), 536-47. See especially, 544-45.

[13] Yeats's specific debt here may be to the language of Grierson's explanation of the effectiveness of Donne's devotional poetry: "This passionate penitence, this beating as it were against the bars of self in the desire to break through to a fuller apprehension of the mercy and love of God, is the intensely human note of these latest poems" (II, liii) (emphasis mine).

[14] For discussions of Yeats's interest in Landor see Vivian Mercier, "The Future of Landor Criticism," in Some British Romantics: A Collection of Essays, ed. James V. Logan, John E. Jordan and Northrop Frye (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966), 43-85, especially 45-47, 73, 81-82; Jeffares, Comm, 168-69; and Henn, LT, 53.

[15] See "Walton, Cotton and Oldways," in The Complete Works of Walter Savage Landor, ed. T. E. Welby (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), XIV, 158-71. Walton's Life of Dr. John Donne is reprinted in Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry, ed. Alexander M. Witherspoon and Frank J. Warnke, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), 250-71. See especially, 261. For background information to Landor's 'conversation' see the biographical note to the poetry of Charles Cotton in the same volume (992).

[16] Mercier, 45. See "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," in Works, ed. Welby, XV, 12-42, especially 37.

[17] The date of Yeats's reading of The Courtier is also confirmed by Bradford (297 n.) and by Yeats's own remarks in "Discoveries: Second Series" (Massachusetts Review , 305).

[18] "The Thinking of the Body" occurs in the portion of Discoveries first published in The Sanachie (Autumn 1907). Castiglione's remark is recalled in "Discoveries: Second Series" (Massachusetts Review, 305), written in 1908.

[19] See Appendix V.

[20] Stein cites from Eliot's "Milton," Sewanee Review, LVI (1948), 208 ("It was one of our tenets . . . words and phrases that had not been used in poetry before").

[21] Jeffares cites Yeats's possible source as the second poem to the second book of Propertius. See Comm, 186.

[22] The phrase also appears in "Conjunctions" (1934) where again it describes a combination of opposites: "Should Jupiter and Saturn meet / What a crop of mummy wheat!" (CP, 333). The word "mummy" itself may also be found in "Byzantium" (1930) (CP, 280), "Vacillation" (1931-32) (CP, 285) and "A Bronze Head" (1937-38) (CP, 382).

[23] Whether either Duncan or Brooks is correct in his analysis of the poem seems open to question, especially in view of the opposing exegesis offered by Unterecker (Reader's Guide, 189-91) who bases his remarks on Yeats's observation in "Four Years: 1887-1891": "I thought that all art should be a Centaur finding in the popular lore its back and strong legs. . . . One thing I did not foresee, not having the courage of my own thought: the growing murderousness of the world" (189; cited from A, 191-92). Unterecker thus provides an analysis of the poem which develops from the assumption that the Centaur may be identified with "the sort of national culture Yeats had once hoped to found" (Reader's Guide, 190). However, what seems to hold true for all three, although it is not emphasized by Unterecker, is that "horse-play" is a pun, and thus, a metaphysical device.

[24] See also Complete English Poems, ed. Smith, 663.

[25] See remarks regarding the value of creating a pose in Samhain: 1908 (E, 325). Yeats draws an analogy between a literary 'pose' and the pose of a statue in [Draft #3] E, of his 1910 lecture, "Friends of My Youth," published in "Yeats's Lecture Notes for 'Friends of My Youth,'" ed. Joseph Ronsley, Yeats and The Theatre, ed. O'Driscoll and Reynolds, 76-78.

NOTES

PART C: Yeats and Milton

[1]See Bloom, Yeats, 8; Denis Donoghue, "On The Winding Stair," in HG, 109; Harris, 106, 112; Henn, LT, 133 and "Yeats's Symbolism," in Integrity, 37; Jeffares, The Circus Animals, 32 and Man and Poet, 217, 230, 229 and 329; Graham Martin, "The Wild Swans at Coole," in HG, 68; Whitaker, Swan and Shadow, 174; and Witt, "The Making of an Elegy," MP (November 1950), 112.

[2]See Bloom, 193; Harris, 119; Kermode, RI, 36; Robert Snukal, High Talk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 149; A. G. Stock, W. B. Yeats: His Poetry and Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 119; and Witt, 112.

[3]See Hone, 204; Richard Ellmann, Eminent Domain (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 66 and 137 n.; and Jeffares, Man and Poet, 167 and 331, n. 100.

[4]See Adams, IKON: John Milton and The Modern Critics (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1955), 203 and 220; Berkeley, Inwrought with Figures Dim (Paris: Mouton, 1974), 132; Brisman, Milton's Poetry of Choice and Its Romantic Heirs (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1973), 13-14, 34, 145 and 150; Brooks and Hardy, Poems of Mr. John Milton: The 1645 Edition with Essays in Analysis (London: Denis Dobson, 1957), 167; Murray, Milton: The Modern Phase (London: Longmans, 1967), 48-49, 58, 89, 98 and 133; Rajan, The Lofty Rhyme (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), especially 24-25; Ross, Poetry and Dogma (New Brunswick New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954), Ryken, The Apocalyptic Vision in 'Paradise Lost' (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970), 75; Stein, The Art of Presence (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 73; W. B. C. Watkins, An Anatomy of Milton's Verse (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1955), 13 ; and Wittreich, Angel of Apocalypse (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), xiv-xv and 151-52.

[5]Kermode does not specifically distinguish Yeats's attitude to Milton. However, since he traces the cause of Milton's dislodgement to the Symbolist historiography espoused by Pound, Eliot and others, and since he qualifies Yeats's participation in the Symbolist movement, he at least partially dissociates Yeats from his contemporaries and helps

to define the distinctions which account for Yeats's unique appreciation of Milton. See especially Romantic Image, Chapt. VII, particularly 145-50. See also, "Dissociation of Sensibility," in Essential Articles for the Study of John Donne's Poetry, ed. Roberts, 66-82, particularly, 73-77.

[6]See Appendices X and XI.

[7]"Milton II," On Poetry and Poets, 165-66.

[8]Sharma, Murray, Waldock and others have traced the re-assessment of Milton which began with Greenlaw, Liljegren, and Hanford, and continued through Havens, Saurat, Tillyard and Grierson. Their studies not only illustrate how scholars of the late nineteen-tens and early twenties provided a corrective to the critical trend established by Pound and Eliot, they also serve to emphasize how far above contemporary debate Yeats actually stood, since he had never denied the recognition of Milton's worth which those scholars were attempting to assert.

[9]Indeed, remarks like that in A Vision [A], 149 ("Milton was the first English writer who made philosophical use of the obliquity of the ecliptic . . . .") suggest that Yeats also read Milton specifically for his ideas.

[10]See Appendix IX.

[11]Yeats's attention to Blake in the 1890's resulted in the publication of two volumes: The Works of William Blake, Poetic, Symbolic and Critical, ed. Ellis and Yeats (London: Quarrich, 1893) and The Poems of William Blake, ed. W. B. Yeats (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1893).

[12]Denis Saurat, Milton: Man and Thinker (London: Jonathan Cape, n.d. [Preface dated Bordeaux, 1924]). Anne Yeats reports that Yeats's copy has been much used, especially at 19, 75, 101, 139, 185, 205, 207, 254, 285 and 303.

[13]See Appendices X, XI and XII.

[14]Cited by Torchiana, 114.

[15]Brooks's remarks are cited by Patrick Murray, Milton: The Modern Phase (London: Longmans, 1967), 13. Murray's study provides a survey of twentieth-century Milton criticism, including that of Yeats's contemporaries. While Yeats is mentioned in passing, his view of Milton is not discussed.

[16]"Friends of My Youth," is printed in "Yeats on Personality: Three Unpublished Lectures," ed. Robert O'Driscoll, in Yeats and the Theatre, 25-41. See also O'Driscoll's Critical and Editorial Introductions, 4-16.

[17]Saurat's view here is somewhat modified by John R. M. Adams who addresses the same problem: the poet's need to believe and his difficulty in finding something in which to believe. He remarks that "From Milton's machinery it is, as Mr. Ross brilliantly points out, only a few steps to the 'gnostic' machinery of Blake and the almost ventriloqual apparatus of Yeats. Though the content of his faith was in good measure severely traditional, Milton's relation to it was generally that of one who believes for personal if not for literary reasons"(IKON: John Milton and the Modern Critics, 220). Adams's "ventriloqual apparatus" nicely distinguishes the emptiness of Yeats's system when compared with the spiritual content of the Christian tradition which stands behind De Doctrina. See also M. M. Ross, Poetry and Dogma, 226.

[18]Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., Angel of Apocalypse (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), xiv-xv. See also Wittreich's remarks on 'Revolutionary Art' with regard to Eliot, Yeats, Blake and Milton (151-52).

[19]When Yeats revised this passage for Estrangement in 1926, "had become a powerful element of" became "dominated," and "ignoble" became "a vulgarity," (A, 490).

[20]However, Yeats first attempted to use these lines from Paradise Lost much earlier, in an 1885 poem "Love and Death," where he adapted the detail of "the garland wreath'd for Eve" and combined it with the departure from Eden:

> With wreaths of withered flowers
> Two lonely spirits wait,
> With wreaths of withered flowers,
> 'Fore paradise's gate.
> They may not pass the portal,
> Poor earth-enkindled pair,
> Though sad is many a spirit
> To pass and leave them there
> Still staring at their flowers,
> That dull and faded are.
>
> (VE, 680)

[21]Cf. PL, IV, 288-93: "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,/ Godlike erect, with native Honor clad/ In naked Majesty seem'd Lords of all,/ And worthy seem'd, for in thir looks Divine/ The image of thir glorious Maker shone/ Truth, Wisdom. . . ."

[22]From another point of view, in his Lyric of Tragedy, B. L. Reid observes a similar response in Yeats's work. Having called "the loss of the perfect," "tragedy's archetypal subject," (7), he points to characteristics of Yeats's tragic art which distinguish the modern attitude to that loss: "There is more at the end of tragedy than Milton's 'calm of mind' or 'new acquist,' though those are well. Do we not feel, in the presence of tragic art, something beyond emptiness and peace and instruction: an excitement, an actual vicarious triumph, a sense of liberation and power, a heightening and lightening of the body and the spirit, a feeling that we transcend, even while we unite with, the tragic experience?" (24).

[23]See Appendix XIII: Yeats's references to Adam/Adam's, and Eden/Eden's and Paradise.

[24]L'Allegro, ll. 78-80. Donoghue points out that 'deep' in l. 78 should read 'high' (78, n. 2).

[25]Comus, ll. 476-78.

[26]See Appendix XI.

[27]Noted by Ellmann, Identity, 130. See also Appendix XI.

[28]In the preceding note, i.e., note to p. 4, l. 1, Poems of Spenser, 265, Yeats suggests that Spenser's "Plumes of perfect speculation" are equivalent to "wings of soaring thought," perhaps anticipating "the sweet laughing eagle thoughts/ Where wings have memory of wings . . ." in these lines from "Upon a House."

[29]George Bornstein who has studied the relationship between Yeats and Shelley is of little help in this regard. His one reference to Il Penseroso occurs in the quotation from Yeats's "A General Introduction," 'I commit my emotion . . .," which he cites, almost without comment (Yeats and Shelley: The Surfeited Alastor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 138).

[30]Witt cites Palmer's comment from his memoirs (A. H. Palmer, Samuel Palmer: A Memoir (London, 1882), 72). A. N. Jeffares cites a similar remark from the description which accompanies Palmer's illustration in The Shorter Poems of John Milton (1889) which began, "Here a poetic loneliness has been attempted: not the loneliness of a desert, but a secluded spot in a genial pastoral country . . .," (Jeffares, 205).

[31]See also Blake: Complete Writings, ed. G. Keynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 617-19.

[32]See Appendix XIII.

[33]See Paradise Lost I, 6; III, 1-8; VII, 1-2 (Harris, 15).

[34]See also John Holloway, "Style and World in The Tower," in HG, 97.

[35]Hazard Adams makes a necessary reference to the humour of the situation which Yeats describes, remarking that Yeats's incapacity is "not pathetic but comical and in some curious way even possibly admirable. There is no pose implied by Yeats's quoting Milton in his excitement. Rather there is quite the opposite--an unwilled gesture--a sort of desperation in his recognition that something must be said" ("Some Yeatsian Versions of Comedy," in In Excited Reverie, ed. Jeffares and Cross, (London: Macmillan, 1965), 159-60).

[36]This passage was somewhat revised for the later publication. Changes are stylistic, however, not substantive.

[37]Pound's Cantos may be an exception, but they are, at best, a limited success.

Yeats provided an early indication of the scope of his literary ambitions in his Preface to The Countess Kathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics (1892) where he described, and explained, his choice of forms: "The Christian cycle being mainly concerned with contending moods and moral motives needed, I thought, a dramatic vehicle. The tumultous and heroic Pagan cycle, on the other hand, having to do with vast and shadowy activities and with the great impersonal emotions, expressed itself naturally--or so I imagined--in epic and epic-lyric measures. No epic method seemed sufficiently minute and subtle for the one, and no dramatic method elastic and all-containing enough for the other" (VE, 845). The experimentation with forms outlined in this passage, especially the reference to 'epic-lyric measures,' anticipates Yeats's later accomplishments in the lyric form which together approach the epic of old, accomplishments for which Donald Stauffer has called Yeats the first poet in English to bring the lyric to "an equal plane with the epic and the drama in dignity and power" (Cited by G. B. Saul, "In . . . Luminous Wind," The Dolmen Press Yeats Centenary Papers, ed. Liam Miller with a Preface by Jon Stallworthy (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1968), 215. See also Donald Stauffer, The Golden Nightingale (New York: Hafner, 1971), 52).

[38]Blake's Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience also come to mind as members of this tradition with which Yeats would have been familiar.

[39]Jeffares, Comm., 5.

[40]Cf. PL, IV, 58-79; X.

[41]See, for example, Kermode (RI, 38-40) and McAlindon (169).

[42]See "In Quintum Novembris," l. 52 and Comus, l. 877.

[43]See Wilson, W. B. Yeats and the Tradition, 215, and Albright, Myth Against Myth, especially 121-25, but also the whole chapter entitled "The Poverty of Heaven: 'News for the Delphic Oracle.'"

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APPENDIX I: Contents of Yeats's Library, Items Relating to Jonson

The following is a list of editions of Jonson's works in Yeats's library as reported by Anne Yeats, April 1975. They are recorded in chronological order of publication. Miss Yeats's remarks follow each entry (in parentheses). Where necessary, annotations also follow (in brackets).

Jonson, Ben. The Works of Ben Jonson with notes critical and explanatory, and a bibliographical memoir by William Gifford, ed. by Lt Col Francis Cunningham. 3 vols. London: Chatto and Windus, n.d. [1872; reissue, 1912][1]

(Gifford's Dedication to George Canning is dated 3 July 1816.)

(Signature, front fly: Georgie Hyde-Lees (i.e., in v. 1). In vol. 3 a number of pp. are uncut. Timber; or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter (pp. 389-425) is entirely cut.)

----------. Masques and Entertainments, ed. by Henry Morley. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1890.

----------. Ben Jonson, ed. with an Introduction and Notes by Brinsley Nicholson and C. H. Herford. The Mermaid Series. In 3 vols. London: T. Fisher Unwin, n.d. [1893-95; reissue, [1904]][2]

(Only vol. 3 is now here in library.)

----------. Every Man in His Humour, ed. with a preface, Notes and Glossary by W. Macneile Dixon. J. M. Dent and Co., 1903.

(The Temple Dramatists)

----------. Every Man in His Humour, ed. by Percy Simpson. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1919.

(Front fly: The editor has copied out Herrick's 'Prayer to Ben Jonson' and put his signature below.)

----------. Works, ed. by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson. 5 vols. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925-37.

(Book Plate: W. B. Yeats
Vol. I: "Life" uncut after p. 77; cut almost wholly: "Conversations with Drummond"; pp. 178-227; 250-64; "Books in Jonson's Library"; 275 - end of volume.
Vol. II: many pp. uncut.
Vol. III: many pp. cut. Mainly cut: Every Man in His Humour. The Quarto of 1601. Insert slip (probably not in W. B. Y's hand) listing characters and contemporary actors of Volpone and The Alchemist.
Vol. IV: wholly or almost wholly cut: Cynthia's Revels and Eastward Ho.
Vol. V: mostly uncut.)

APPENDIX II: Direct References to Ben Jonson

Direct references to Jonson have been arranged chronologically according to Yeats's reference. Jonson and Yeats have been abbreviated to J or BJ and Y or WBY throughout. For other abbreviations, see preceding table.

1891

"The audiences that loved BJ's Masks . . ." (LNI, 216).

1901

"He is remembering a passage in . . . BJ's Underwoods [sic]" (E, 81).

". . . take with you BJ's 'Beauty like sorrow dwelleth everywhere' . . ." (E&I, 7).

1902

". . . and BJ was but five years old" (E&I, 359).[3]

"[Spenser] fled to England and died some three months later . . ., as BJ says, 'for lack of bread'" (E&I, 363).[4]

1905

"Our staging of Kincora . . . was beautiful, with a high, grave dignity and that strangeness which BJ thought to be part of all excellent beauty . . ." (E, 181).

1906

"BJ says in The Poetaster that even the best of men . . ." (E&I, 278).

"I am deep in BJ. . . . I am thinking of writing something on BJ, or more likely perhaps upon the ideal of life that flitted before the imagination of J and the others. . . .
Is there any possibility that J meant Shakespeare not Chapman by the character of Virgil in The Poetaster? I find it hard to believe that the few not too lively plays written by Chapman before that date could have made J say. . . .[5]
Is there any book that would tell me about . . . BJ's Masques?" (Letter to Bullen, L, 478-79).

". . . also in BJ's magnificent song, 'To Cynthia':--'Hesperus entreats thy light, / Goddess excellently bright'" [V, vi, 5-6] (n. to p. 18, l. 22, Poems of Spenser, 267).

"Cf. BJ.s well-known play, Sejanus his Fall . . ." (n. to p. 75, l. 9, Poems of Spenser, 270-71).

1907

"In the great days of English dramatic art the greatest English writer of comedy was free to create The Alchemist and Volpone. . . ." (E, 225).

". . . the feeling for fine oratory that made possible the rogues and clowns of BJ . . ." (UP, II, 355).

1909

"Evans . . . makes me think of that line written . . . by BJ--'So rammed with life . . .'" (Memoirs, 165; A, 480).

". . . Maybe Shakespeare had passed the threshold, and none the less for J's drinking bout." (Memoirs, 233; A, 521-22).[6]

1914

"The word 'bourgeois' which I had used is not an aristocratic term of reproach, but, like the older 'cit' which one finds in BJ, a word of artistic usage" (Memoirs, 270).

". . . / Beyond the fling of the dull ass's hoof / --BJ's phrase . . ." (Closing Rhyme to Responsibilities, CP, 143).

1916-17[7]

". . . I came to think of [Rolleston], in BJ's phrase, 'a hollow image'" (Memoirs, 51).

1917

"Surely of the passionate dead we can but cry in words BJ meant for none but Shakespeare: 'So rammed . . .'" (M, 360).

1921

"How much do I owe you for my orchestral stall for Volpone? I hope I may be able to see the other BJ when you do it" (Letter to Miss Fredman, L, 664-65).

1922

". . . though BJ could find no justification for the entomologist in The New Inn . . ." (A, 325).

1923

"I had repeated to myself what I could remember of BJ's address to the Court of his time, 'Thou art a beautiful and brave spring. . . . Thy servant but not slave, BJ'" (A, 545).

1925

". . . unlike BJ, Shakespeare fought no duels. . . ." (AV(A), 87; AV(B), 153).

1930

"Do not thou grieve nor blush to be / As all th'inspired and tuneful men / And all thy great forefathers were / From Homer down to Ben" (E, 328).

1938

"When eighteen or nineteen I wrote a pastoral play under the influence of Keats and Shelley, modified by that of BJ's 'Sad Shepherd' . . ." (UP, II, 508).

"In J's Volpone, one of the greatest satiric comedies, Volpone goes to his doom . . . and this excites us because it makes us share in J's cold implacability" (E, 445).

APPENDIX III: Direct References to Ben Jonson's Works

Direct references to Ben Jonson's works have been arranged chronologically according to both Yeats's reference and the date of Jonson's works.

Non-Dramatic Works

The Forrest

1922

". . . love-songs like 'Drink to me only with thine eyes' . . ."(A, 204) "Song. To Celia" (The Forrest IX).

The Under-wood

1901

"He is remembering a passage in . . . BJ's Underwoods [sic]" (E, 81).

Timber; or Discoveries

1900

". . . one bull is all that remains of Shakespeare's talk . . ." (E&I, 153).[8]

Dramatic Works

Cynthia's Revels, or The Fountain of Self-love

1906

Cited in n. to p. 18, l. 22, Poems of Spenser, 267 ["'Hesperus entreats thy light, / Goddess excellently bright'" (V, vi, 5-6)].

1923

Cited in A, 545-46 ["'Thou art a beautiful and brave spring. . . . Thy servant but not slave, BJ'" (Dedication)].

Poetaster, or His Arraignment

1906

"BJ says in The Poetaster that even the best of men . . ." (E&I, 278) [V, i, 15].

"Is there any possibility that J meant Shakespeare not Chapman by the character of Virgil in The Poetaster?" (Letter to Bullen, L, 479).

1909

"Evans . . . makes me think of that line written . . . by BJ--'So rammed with life . . .'" (Memoirs, 165; A, 480) [V, i, 136].

1910

Synge had "a medicinal manner of speech . . . so little abstract . . . and so rammed with life . . ." (E&I, 335) [V, i, 136].

1914

". . . / Beyond the fling of the dull ass's hoof / --BJ's phrase . . ." (Closing Rhyme to Responsibilities, CP, 143) [Apologetical Dialogue, 139].

1916-17

". . . I came to think of [Rolleston], in BJ's phrase, 'a hollow image'" (Memoirs, 51) [V, i, 15].

1917

"Surely of the passionate dead we can but cry in words BJ meant for none but Shakespeare: 'So rammed . . .'" (M, 360).

". . . animate / The trivial days and ram them with the sun" ("Vacillation," ll. 20-21, CP, 282) [V, i, 136].

1936

"Rammed full / Of that most sensuous silence of the night" ("To Dorothy Wellesley," ll. 5-6, CP, 349) [V, i, 136].

Sejanus His Fall

1906

"Cf. BJ's well-known play, Sejanus his Fall . . ." (n. to p. 75, l. 9, Poems of Spenser, 270-71).

Volpone, or The Fox

1907

". . . the greatest English writer of comedy was free to create The Alchemist and Volpone . . . (E, 225).

1916

". . . the whole Hamlet, Volpone and some Molière plays staged strangely and beautifully" (Letter to Lady Gregory, L, 612).

1921

"How much do I owe you for my orchestral stall for Volpone? . . . Volpone was even finer than I expected . . ." (Letter to Miss Fredman, L, 664-65).

1938

"In Jonson's Volpone, one of the greatest satiric comedies . . ." (E, 445).

Epicoene, or The Silent Woman

1905

"In the Elizabethan comedy, The Silent Woman, for instance, the details were full of invention and vitality . . ." (Letter to Lady Gregory, L, 450).

1906

"When The Silent Woman rammed a century of laughter into the two hours' traffic . . ."(E&I, 280).[9]

The Alchemist

1907

". . . the greatest English writer of comedy was free to create The Alchemist and Volpone . . ."(E, 225).

Bartholomew Fair

1921

"Bartholomew Fair was one of the things that influenced Synge" (Letter to Allan Wade, L, 671).

The New Inn

1922

". . . though BJ could find no justification for the entomologist in The New Inn . . ." (A, 325).

The Sad Shepherd, or a Tale of Robin Hood

1885

Title: "The Sad Shepherd" (CP, 2).

1938

"When eighteen or nineteen I wrote a pastoral play under the influence of Keats and Shelley, modified by that of BJ's 'Sad Shepherd' . . ." (UP, II, 508).

APPENDIX IV: Jonsonian Echoes in Yeats's Work

Jonsonian Echoes in Yeats's work, including affinities of thought, have been arranged chronologically according to the date of Yeats's works. Where applicable, each entry is followed by the citation (in brackets) of other studies in which a particular echo has already been discerned.

1885

Almintor in The Island of Statues (VE, 644-79). Cf. Aeglamour in The Sad Shepherd (especially Prologue, 19-23) [Eddins, 17].

Title:"The Sad Shepherd"(CP, 9). Cf. Title: The Sad Shepherd.

1892

". . . he who would write a memorable song must be ready to give often a few days to a few lines . . . and, if he would be remembered when he is in his grave, he must give to his art the devotion the Crusaders of old gave to their cause . . ." (UP, I, 249). Cf. ". . . things wrote with labour, deserve to be so read, and will last their Age" (Timber; or Discoveries, 2465-66).

1893

"Only by study of the great models can we acquire style. . . . We must learn . . . to make literature almost the most serious thing in our lives . . ." (UP, I, 274). Cf. ". . . that, which wee especially require in him is an exactnesse of Studie, and multiplicity of reading, which maketh a full man . . ." (Timber; or Discoveries, 2482-84).

". . . the inspiration of God . . . comes only to him who labours at rhythm and cadence, at form and style. . . . We must learn . . . to be supreme artists and then God will send to us supreme inspiration" (UP, I, 274). Cf. He must "not thinke, hee can leape forth suddainely a Poet, by dreaming hee hath been in Parnassus, or, having washt his lipps (as they say) in Helicon. There goes more to his making, then so. For to Nature, Excercise, Imitation and Studie, Art must bee added . . ." (Timber; or Discoveries, 2488-93).

1902

". . . literature is but recorded speech . . ." (E, 95). Cf. ". . . speake that I may see thee" (Timber; or Discoveries, 2031-32).

1903

Playwrights "must be able to make a king of Faery or an old countryman or a modern lover speak that language which is his and nobody else's" (E, 108). Cf. Words "are to be chose according to the persons wee make speake, or the things wee speake of" (Timber; or Discoveries, 1893-94).

Yeats urged writers to learn to "construct," to "arrange much complicated life into a single action" (E, 108). Cf. Jonson's definition of a fable as "the Imitation of one intire, and perfect Action . . . (Timber; or Discoveries, 2681-82); and, "in every Action it behooves the Poet to know which is his utmost bound . . ." (Timber; or Discoveries, 2735-36).

". . . one must always be certain that the work of art, as a whole, is masculine and intellectual, in its sound as in its form" (E, 109). Cf. Jonson's contention that style ought to be "strong and manly" (Timber; or Discoveries, 699), even as poets ought to strive for "Manly" composition, avoiding "effeminate Phrase" (Timber; or Discoveries, 797-99).

". . . an art which smothers voice and movement with bad painting, with innumerable garish colours, with continual restless mimicries of the surface of life, is an art of fading humanity, a decaying art" (E, 110). Cf. Jonson's condemnation of those "that labour onely to ostentation; and are ever more busie about the colours, and surface of a worke, then in the matter, and foundation" (Timber; or Discoveries, 691-93).

1904

"Their very words were more vigorous than ours, for their phrases came from a common mint, from the market or tavern, or from the great poets of an older time" (E, 149). Cf. "Custome is the most certaine Mistresse of Language, as the publicke stampe makes the current money. But wee must not be too frequent with the mint. . . . The eldest of the present, and newest of past Language is the best" (Timber; or Discoveries, 1926-36).

1906

". . . every rewriting that has succeeded upon the stage has been an addition to the masculine element, an increase of strength in the bony structure."

Modern literature . . . is monotonous in its structure and effeminate in its continual insistence upon certain moments of strained lyricism" (E, 220). Cf. Jonson's contention that style ought to be "strong and manly" (Timber; or Discoveries, 699), even as poets ought to strive for "Manly" composition, avoiding "effeminate Phrase" (Timber; or Discoveries, 797-99).

"BJ says in The Poetaster that even the best of men without Promethean fire is but a hollow statue . . ." (E&I, 278). Cf. "Yet (not to beare cold formes, nor mens out-termes, / Without the inward fires, and lives of men) / You both have vertues, shining through your shapes; / To shew, your titles are not writ on posts, / Or hollow statues, which the best men are, / Without Promethean stuffings reacht from heaven! (Poetaster, V, i, 11-16).

1908

"The friends that have it I do wrong / Whenever I remake a song, / Should know what issue is at stake: / It is myself that I remake" (VE, 778). Cf. ". . . he, / Who casts to write a living line, must sweat, / (Such as thine are) and strike the second heat / Upon the Muses anvile: turne the same, / (And himself with it) that he thinkes to frame; / Or for the lawrell, he may gain a scorne, / For a good Poet's made, as well as borne" ("To the Memory of my Beloved . . . Shakespeare . . .," Poems, ed. Johnston, 287) [Nichols, 131-32].

1909

"Yet would be now, could I but have my wish, / Colder and dumber and deafer than a fish" ("All things can Tempt me," CP, 109). Cf. "Last, in the fishes place, sits he, doth say: / In married joyes, all should be dumbe, as they" (The Haddington Masque, in H & S, VII, 259) [Nichols, 161-62].

"The fascination of what's difficult / Has dried the sap out of my veins, and rent / Spontaneous joy and natural content / Out of my heart." ("The Fascination of What's Difficult," CP, 104). Cf. "Warme thee by Pindar's fire: / And though thy Nerves be shrunke, and blood be cold, / . . . ("Ode to Himselfe," Poems, ed. Johnston, 299).

"Shiver under the lash, strain, sweat and jolt" ("The Fascination of What's Difficult," CP, 104). Cf. "Runne on, and rage, sweat, censure, and condemn" ("Ode to Himselfe," Poems, ed. Johnston, 298 [Harris, 71].

Evans "himself all muscular force and ardour, makes me think of that line written, as one believes of Shakespeare, by BJ--'so rammed with life that he can but grow in life with being'" (Memoirs, 165; A, 480). Cf. ". . . So ramm'd with life, / That it shall gather strength of life, with being, / And live hereafter more admir'd, then now" (Poetaster, V, i, 136-38).

1910

"Wine comes in at the mouth / And love comes in at the eye" ("A Drinking Song," CP, 104). Cf. "Drinke to me, onely with thine eyes, / . . . ("Song. To Celia" (The Forrest IX) Poems, ed. Johnston, 88). [Carpenter (dissertation), 118].

Synge had "a medicinal manner of speech . . . so little abstract . . . and so rammed with life . . ." (E&I, 335). Cf. ". . . so ramm'd with life, / That it shall gather strength of life, with being, / And live hereafter more admir'd, then now" (Poetaster, V, i, 136-38).

"These are the clouds about the fallen sun, / . . ." ("These are the Clouds," CP, 107). Cf. ". . . other Princes . . . / . . . / Sit in their height, like clouds, before the sunne" (Poetaster, V, i, 47-49) [Harris, 52].

1912

"I made my song a coat" ("A Coat," CP, 142). Cf. ". . . then all their Coates, / That were the happie subject of my songe" ("Ode: 'Yff Men, and tymes were nowe,'") Poems, ed. Johnston, 316 [Nichols, 162].

". . . break the teeth of Time" ("The New Faces," CP, 238). Cf. ". . . stryke the eare of tyme" ("Ode: 'Yff Men, and tymes were nowe,'") Poems, ed. Johnston, 317 [Harris, 70-71]. Also, cf. Apologetical Dialogue to Poetaster, l. 229.

1912-13

"Look up in the sun's eye and give / What the exultant heart calls good / That some new day may breed the best / Because you gave, not what they would, / But the right twigs for an eagle's nest" ("To a Wealthy Man . . .," CP, 120). Cf. Caesar "who addeth to the sunne, / Influence, and lustre . . ."; "Caesar, for his rule, and for so much stuffe / As Fortune puts in his hand, shall dispose it / (As if his hand had eyes, and soule, in it) / With worth, and judgement. 'Hands, that part with gifts / . . .'" (Poetaster, V, i, 41-42; 58-61).

1912-14

"Although I have come close in forty-nine, / I have no child, I have nothing but a book, / Nothing but that to prove your blood and mine" (Introductory Rhymes to Responsibilities, CP, 113). Cf. "Looke how the fathers face / Lives in his issue, even so, the race / Of Shakespeare minde, and manners brightly shines / In his well torned, and true-filed lines" ("To the Memory of my Beloved . . . Shakespeare . . .," Poems, ed. Johnston, 287) [Desai, 41].

1913

"Bred to a harder thing / Than triumph, turn away" ("To a Friend whose Work has come to Nothing," CP, 122). Cf. "Come leave the loathed Stage, / And the more loathsome Age" ("Ode to Himselfe," Poems, ed. Johnston, 298) [Allt, 22].

"If you have revisited the town, thin Shade, / Whether to look upon your monument / (I wonder if the builder has been paid)" ("To a Shade," CP, 123). Cf. "Nor throng'st (when masquing is) to have a sight / Of the short braverie of the night; / To view the jewells, stuffes, the paines, the wit / There wasted, some not paid for yet!" ("To Sir Robert Wroth" (The Forrest III), Poems, ed. Johnston, 79, ll. 9-12) [Harris, 69].

1914

". . . surmise companions / Beyond the fling of the dull ass's hoof / -- BJ's phrase--. . ." (Closing Rhyme to Responsibilities, CP, 143). Cf. ". . . sing high and aloofe, / Safe from the wolves black jaw, and the dull Asses hoofe" ("An Ode. To himselfe" (The Under-wood XXIII), Poems, ed. Johnston, 151); also, cf. Apologetical Dialogue to Poetaster, 11, 238-39 [Allt, 23; Bloom, 176; Davie Integrity , 65; HG, 82-83; McAlindon, 165; Nichols, 161; Whitaker, 158].

"I can forgive even that wrong of wrongs" (Closing Rhyme to Responsibilities, CP, 143). Cf. ". . . faith, I forgive thee freely / . . ." (Poetaster, V, iii, 455) [McAlindon, 165].

"The clever man who cries / The catch-cries of the clown, / The beating down of the wise / And great Art beaten down" ("The Fisherman," CP, 166-67). Cf. ". . . pride and impudence in faction knit, / Usurpe the Chaire of wit" ("Ode to Himselfe," Poems, ed. Johnston, 298) [Allt, 22-23].

1916-17

". . . I came to think of [Rolleston], in BJ's phrase, 'a hollow image'" (Memoirs, 51). Cf. "Or hollow statues, which the best men are, / Without Promethean stuffings . . ." (Poetaster, V, i, 15-16).

1917

"surely of the passionate dead we can but cry in words BJ meant for none but Shakespeare: 'So rammed are they with life they can but grow in life with being'" (M, 360). Cf. ". . . so ramm'd with life, / That it shall gather strength of life, with being, / And live hereafter more admir'd, then now" (Poetaster, V, i, 136-38).

1918

"Now that we're almost settled in our house / I'll name the friends that connot sup with us / Beside a fire of turf in th'ancient tower" ("In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," CP, 148). Cf. "Now that the harth is crown'd with smiling fire, / And some doe drinke . . ." ("Ode. To Sir William Sydney, on his Birth-day" (The Forrest XIV), Poems, ed. Johnston, 100 [Harris, 70].

"Our Sidney and our perfect man" ("In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," CP, 150). Cf. "Nothing perfect done, / But as a Cary, or a Morrison" ("To the Immortall Memorie . . . Cary, and Morison" (The Under-wood LXX), Poems, ed. Johnston, 214) [McAlindon, 168; Harris, 70]. Also, cf. "Know you to be a Sydney . . ." ("To Mary Lady Wroth" (Epigramme CIII), Poems, ed. Johnston, 52) [Harris, 69]; and, "My Muse bad, Bedford write, . . ." (Epigramme LXXVI), Poems, ed. Johnston, 36) [Harris, 70].

"Some burn damp faggots" ("In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," CP, 151). Cf. "Or in small Fagots have him blaze about; / Vile Tavernes . . ." ("An Execration upon Vulcan" (The Under-wood XLIII), Poems, ed. Johnston, 182, ll. 185-6) [Harris, 70].

1919

"Ceremony's a name for the rich horn, / And custom for the spreading laurel tree" ("A Prayer for my Daughter," CP, 214). Cf. "The Servant of the Serving-woman, in scorne, / Ne're came to taste the plenteous Mariage-horne" ("An Epistle to a Friend, to perswade him to the Warres" (The Under-wood XV), Poems, ed. Johnston, 141, ll. 99-100) [Nichols, 161].

1921

Some "would through hatred of the bays / Bring . . . to nought" ("A Prayer for my Son," CP, 238). Cf. "FAIRE FAME, who art ordain'd to crowne / With ever-greene, and great renowne, / Their Heads, that Envy would hold downe / With her, in shade / . . . ("The Dedication of her Cradle" ("Eupheme I," The Under-wood LXXXIV), Poems, ed. Johnston, 238) [Harris, 71].

1926

". . . I must be gone / While night shuts the eyes / Of the household spies" ("Parting," CP, 311). Cf. "Cannot we delude the eyes / Of a few poor household spies?" (Volpone, III, ll. 179-80) [Henn, LT, 259].

1927

"Arise and bid me strike a match / And strike another till time catch" ("In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz," CP, 264). Cf. ". . . Meddle with your match, / And the strong lines, that so the time doe catch" ("An Execration upon Vulcan" (The Under-wood XLIII), Poems, ed. Johnston, 179, ll. 77-78) [Harris, 70].

1929

"And after nailed upon the night / Berenice's burning hair" ("Her Dream," CP, 299). Cf. "Who made a lampe of Berenices hayre?" ("Epistle to Elizabeth Countesse of Rutland" (The Forrest XII), Poems, ed. Johnston, 95, l. 61) [Henn, LT, 259].

1931

"Get all the gold and silver that you can, / Satisfy ambition, animate / The trivial days and ram them with the sun" ("Vacillation," CP, 283). Cf. ". . . so ramm'd with life, / That it shall gather strength of life, with being"(Poetaster, V, i, 136-38).

1936

". . . Old Rocky Face, look forth" ("The Gyres," CP, 337). Cf. "my rockie face" ("My Picture Left in Scotland" (The Under-wood IX), Poems, ed. Johnston, 128) [Harris, 71; Stallworthy, Vision and Revision, 37].

"Rammed full / Of that most sensuous silence of the night" ("To Dorothy Wellesley," CP, 349). Cf. ". . . so ramm'd with life, / That it shall gather strength of life, with being" (Poetaster, V, i, 136-38).

1938

"O Rocky Voice" ("The Man and the Echo," CP, 394). Cf. ". . . my rockie face" ("My Picture Left in Scotland" (The Under-wood IX), Poems, ed. Johnston, 128) [Stallworthy, Vision and Revision, 37].

APPENDIX V: Contents of Yeats's Library, Items Relating to Donne

The following is a list of editions of Donne's works in Yeats's library as reported by Anne Yeats, April 1975.

Donne, John. The Poems of John Donne. Edited from the old editions and numerous manuscripts with introductions and commentary, ed. by Herbert J. C. Grierson. 2 vols. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1912.

(Vol. I: Many pages uncut; wholly or largely cut: "Songs and Sonets," "Elegies," "Satyres," "The Progresse of the Soule" (pp. 295-316: to distinguish from "Of the Progresse of the Soule," pp. 249ff.)

(Vol. II: Cutting confined mostly to Grierson's "Introduction," to the commentaries on the poetry listed above, and surprisingly, to the commentary on "Letters to Several Personages."

----------. Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, ed. John Hayward. New York: The Nonesuch Press, 1929

("In addition to the standard unlimited impression of this book, 675 copies (of which 220 are for sale in the United States of America) have been printed on Pannekoek paper . . . This is number 103.")

(Book-plate: W. B. Yeats

Front fly: W. B. Y. / from George / 1930)

APPENDIX VI: Direct References to John Donne

Direct references to Donne have been arranged chronologically according to Yeats's reference. Donne and Yeats have been abbreviated to D and Y thoughout.

1912

"I write to thank you for your edition of D. . . . I have been using it constantly and find that at last I can understand D. . . .
I find it difficult to believe . . . that D was not the lover of Lady Bedford. The poem written on the supposition of her death . . . seems to me conclusive . . . (Letter to H. J. C. Grierson, L, 570-71).

1918

"And I may dine at journey's end / With Landor and with D" ("To a Young Beauty," CP, 157).

1921-22

"D could be as metaphysical as he pleased. . . .
I have felt in certain early works of my own . . . and here and there in the work of others . . . a slight, sentimental sensuality which is disagreeable, and does not exist in the work of D . . . (A, 326).

1926

"I have been reading your D again . . . especially that intoxicating 'St. Lucies Day' which I consider always an expression of passion and proof that he was the Countess of Bedford's lover (Letter to H. J. C. Grierson, L, 710).

1931

". . . the spiritual torture of D . . ." (E&I, 399).

1937

"The Phoenix was, it seems, the Duchess of Bedford, and if you look up D's poem 'St. Lucy's Day,' a poem of great passion, I think you will be convinced . . . that . . . she had an affair with D . . . (Letter to Dorothy Wellesley, L, 902).

APPENDIX VII: Direct References to John Donne's Works

Yeats refers directly to only one of Donne's works, "A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day." Those references, made in 1912, 1926 and 1937, have already been documented in Appendix VI above.

APPENDIX VIII: Donnean Echoes in Yeats's Work

Donnean echoes in Yeats's work, including affinities of thought, have been arranged chronologically according to the date of Yeats's works.

1906-07

Title: "The Thinking of the Body" and "Neither painting could move us at all, if our thought did not rush out to the edges of our flesh. . . . (E&I, 292). Cf. ". . . her pure, and eloquent blood / Spoke in her cheekes, and so distinctly wrought, / That one might almost say, her body thought" (The Second Anniversary, in I, 258, ll. 244-46).

1909

"Why should I be dismayed / Though flame had burned the whole / World, as it were a coal, / Now I have seen it weighed / Against a soul?" ("A Friend's Illness," CP, 109). Cf. "O wrangling schooles that search what fire / Shall burne this world . . . / . . . / . . . I had rather owner bee / Of thee one houre, than all else ever" ("A Feaver," I, 21 [Carpenter, MP, 58].

1912

"We sat as silent as a stone, / We knew, though she'd not said a word" ("A Memory of Youth," CP, 138). Cf. "Wee like sepulchrall statues lay; / All day, the same our postures were, / And wee said nothing, all the day" ("The Extasie," I, 52) [Duncan, Revival, 134-35].

1918

"Some burn damp faggots, others may consume / The entire combustible world in one small room" ("In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," CP, 151). Cf. "To leave this world behind is death, / But when thou from this world wilt goe, / The whole world vapors with thy breath"; "O wrangling schooles, that search what fire / Shall burne this world, had none the wit / Unto this knowledge to aspire, /That this her feaver might be it?" ("A Feaver," I, 21) [Duncan, Revival, 136]. Also, cf. ". . . one little roome an every where" ("The Good-Morrow," (I, 7).

"Some burn damp faggots, others may consume / The entire combustible world in one small room / As though dried straw, and if we turn about / The bare chimney is gone black out / Because the work had perished in that flare" ("In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," CP, 151). Cf. "Seeke wee then our selves in our selves; for as / Men force the Sunne with much more force to passe, / By gathering his beames with a christall glasse; / So wee, If wee into our selves will turne, / Blowing our sparkes of vertue, may out burne / The straw, which doth about our hearts sojourne" ("To Mr Rowland Woodward, I, 186). [Carpenter, dissertation, 237-38].

"'All day long from mid-day / We have talked in the one place, / All day long from shadowless noon / . . .'"; "'If you had broached a matter / That might the learned please, / You had before the sun had thrown / Our shadows on the ground / . . .'"; ". . . all day long we have found / . . .'" ("Solomon to Sheba," CP, 155). Cf. "Stand still, and I will read to thee / A Lecture Love, in loves philosophy. / These three houres that we have spent, / Walking here, Two shadows went / Along with us . . . ("A Lecture upon the Shadow," I, 71-72).

"'. . . / There's not a thing but love can make / The world a narrow pound'" ("Solomon to Sheba," CP, 155). Cf. Love "makes one little roome, an every where" ("The Good-Morrow, I, 7); "Thou sunne . . . / the world's contracted thus; / . . . since thy duties bee / To warme the world, that's done in warming us. / Shine here to us, and thou art every where; / This bed thy center is, these walls, thy spheare" ("The Sunne Rising," I, 12) [Duncan, Revival, 138]; "So doth each teare, / Which thee doth weare , / A globe, yea world by that impression grow" ("A Valediction: of Weeping," I, 38); "You . . . / Who did the whole worlds soule contract . . ." ("The Canonization," I, 15).

1919

". . . love has a spider's eye / To find out some appropriate pain" ("Solomon and the Witch," CP, 199). Cf. "The spider love, which transubstantiates all, / And can convert Manna to gall" ("Twicknam Garden," I, 28) [Henn, LT, 57; Duncan, Revival, 134].

"Yet the world ends when these two things, / Though several, are a single light, / When oil and wick are burned in one" ("Solomon and the Witch," CP, 199-200). Cf. "We'are Tapers too, and at our owne cost die, / . . . / The Phoenix ridle hath more wit / By us, we two being one, are it. / So to one neutrall thing both sexes fit, / Wee dye and rise the same, and prove / Mysterious by this love" ("The Canonization," I, 15).

". . . / Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; / . . ." ("The Second Coming," CP, 211). Cf. "'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone; / All just supply, and Relation" (The First Anniversary, in I, 237, ll. 212-14) [Le Comte, 241].

1920

"Midnight has come . . ." ("All Souls' Night," CP, 256). Cf. "Tis the yeares midnight . . ." ("A Nocturnall," I, 44). [Carpenter, dissertation, 114].

1920-21

". . . for his whole body thinks" [description of a portrait of some Venetian gentleman by Strozzi (A, 292). Cf. ". . . her pure and eloquent blood / Spoke in her cheekes, and so distinctly wrought, / That one might almost say, her body thought" (The Second Anniversary, in I, 258, ll. 244-46).

1925

"Death and life were not / Till man made up the whole, / Made lock, stock and barrel / Out of his bitter soul" ("The Tower," CP, 223). Cf. "Death be not proud . . . / . . . / . . . death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die" (Holy Sonets X, I, 326).

1926

". . . and it seemed that our two natures blent / Into a sphere from youthful sympathy, / Or else, to alter Plato's parable, / Into the yolk and white of the one shell" ("Among School Children," CP, 243). Cf. "Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one" ("The Good-Morrow," I, 7) [Duncan, Revival, 138]. Also, cf. "When love, with one another so / Interinanimates two soules, / That abler soule, which thence doth flow, / Defects of lonelinesse controules" ("The Extasie," I, 52); "So doth each teare, / Which thee doth weare, / A globe, yea world by that impression grow, / Till thy teares mixt with mine doe overflow / This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven dissolved so" ("A Valediction: of Weeping," I, 38).

"With sixty or more winters on its head" ("Among School Children," CP, 244). Cf. "'Till age snow white haires on thee" ("Song. 'Goe, and catche a falling starre,' I, 8) [G. B. Saul, Prolegomena to the Study of Yeats's Poems (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1958), 131; cited by Jeffares, Comm, 302].

"Dear, I must be gone / While night shuts the eyes / Of the household spies" ("Parting," CP, 311). Cf. "Since she must go, and I must mourn, come Night / Environ me with darkness . . ."; ". . . thou didst hazard us / To paths in love so dark, so dangerous: / And those so ambush'd round with household spies." ("His Parting from her" (Elegy XII), I, 100-01, ll. 1; 39-41) [Duncan, Revival, 143].

"But when this soul, its body off, / Naked to naked goes" ("A Last Confession," CP, 314). Cf. ". . . / Our soules (which to advance their state, / Were gone out,) hung 'twixt her, and mee. / And whil'st our soules negotiate there, / Wee like sepulchrall statues lay / . . . ("The Extasie," I, 51-52).

1926-27

"We sat under an old thorn-tree / And talked away the night. / . . . / And when we talked of growing up / Knew that we'd halved a soul / And fell the one in t'other's arms / That we might make it whole" ("Summer and Spring," CP, 253). Cf. "Where . . . / A Pregnant banke swel'd up . . . / . . . / Sat we two . . . / . . . / When love, with one another so / Interinanimates two soules, / That abler soule, which thence doth flow, / Defects of lonelinesse controules. / . . . / But O alas, so long, so farre / Our bodies why doe wee forbeare? / . . . / As our blood labours to beget / Spirits, as like soules as it can, / Because such fingers need to knit / That subtle knot, which makes us man: / So must pure lovers souls descend / T'affections, and to faculties, / . . . / To'our bodies turne we then . . ." ("The Extasie," I, 51-53).

1927

". . . where the crime's committed / The crime can be forgot" ("Consolation," CP, 310). Cf. "Thy firmnes makes my circle just, / And makes me end, where I begunne" ("A Valediction: forbidding mourning," I, 51) [LT, 63, n. 2].

"A great man in his pride / . . . / Cast derision upon / Supercession of breath; / He knows death to the bone-- / Man has created death" ("Death," CP, 264). Cf. "Death be not proud . . . / . . . / . . . death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die" (Holy Sonets, X, I, 326) [Desai, 119].

1929

"I dreamed . . . / . . . / That I had shorn my locks away / And laid them on Love's lettered tomb: / But something bore them out of sight / . . . / And after nailed upon the night / Berenice's burning hair" ("Her Dream," CP, 299). Cf. "That subtile wreath of haire . . ." ("The Funerall," I, 58); "A bracelet of bright haire about the bone" ("The Relique," I, 62) [Duncan, Revival, 135].

"I made, and may not break it / When the last thread has run, / A bargain with that hair / And all the windings there" ("His Bargain," CP, 299). Cf. "That subtile wreath of haire . . ." ("The Funerall," I, 58); "A bracelet of bright haire about the bone" ("The Relique," I, 62) [Duncan, Revival, 135].

1930

"Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood, / Spirit after spirit! . . . / . . . / Those images that yet / Fresh images beget" ("Byzantium," CP, 281). Cf. "As our blood labours to beget / Spirits, as like soules as it can, / Because such fingers need to knit / That subtle knot, which makes us man" ("The Extasie," I, 53) [Henn, LT, 234; Chatterjee, 124].

"'Love is all / Unsatisfied / That cannot take the whole / Body and soul'" ("Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgment," CP, 291). Cf. "So must pure lovers soules descend / T'affections, and to faculties, / Which sense may reach and apprehend, / Else a great Prince in prison lies" ("The Extasie," I, 53) [Duncan, Revival, 139].

1931

". . . I bore / The Heavens in my womb" ("The Mother of God," CP, 281). Cf. ". . . that faire blessed Mother-maid / . . . / Whose wombe was a strange heav'n . . ." ("The Virgin Mary" ("The Litanie," I, 339)) [Duncan, Revival, 135].

". . . love is but a skein unwound"; ". . . love's skein upon the ground"; "The skein so bound us ghost to ghost" ("Crazy Jane and Jack the Journeyman," CP, 292-93). Cf. "That subtile wreath of haire . . ." ("The Funerall," I, 58); "A bracelet of bright haire about the bone" ("The Relique," I, 62) [Duncan, Revival, 135].

1934

"Here on the anniversary of their death, / The anniversary of their first embrace" ("Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn," CP, 328). Cf. Donne's Anniversaries [Henn, LT, 316].

". . . the intercourse of angels is a light / Where for its moment both seem lost, consumed" ("Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn," CP, 328). Cf. "Love's mysteries in soules doe grow, / But yet the body is his booke" ("The Extasie," I, 53) [Henn, LT, 348].

1936

"Lovers of horses and of women, shall, / From marble of a broken sepulchre / Or dark betwixt the polecat and the owl, / Or any rich, dark nothing disinter / The workman, noble and saint . . ." ("The Gyres," CP, 337). Cf. Love's alchemy ". . . did express / A quintessence even from nothingnesse, / From dull privations, and leane emptinesse: He ruin'd mee, and I am re-begot / Of absence, darknesse, death; things which are not" ("A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day," I, 44).

"Love cram love's two divisions / Yet keep his substance whole" ("The Lady's Second Song," CP, 344). Cf. "So must pure lovers soules descend / T'affections, and to faculties, / Which sense may reach and apprehend, / Else a great Prince in prison lies. / . . . / And if some lover, such as wee, / Have heard this dialogue of one, / Let him still marke us, he shall see / Small change, when we'are to bodies gone" ("The Extasie," I, 53) [Duncan, Revival, 139].

APPENDIX IX: Contents of Yeats's Library, Items Relating to Milton

The following is a list of editions and a commentary of Milton's works in Yeats's library as reported by Anne Yeats, April 1975.

Editions

Milton, John. Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes and Other Poems. The Temple Classics Series. London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1899.

(p. 372 gives the editor as W. H. D. Rouse.)

----------. Milton. Early Poems.

(. . . Seen through the press by Charles Sturt. Decorations by Charles Ricketts. Printed by Ballantyne Press. Edn limited to 310 copies, of which 300 are for sale. Sold by Hacon and Ricketts, London.)

Illustrated Editions

Blake, William. 'Paradise Lost' by John Milton. Illustrations by William Blake. Printed at the Lyceum Press, Liverpool, and Published by the Liverpool Booksellers' Co. Ltd., 1906.

----------. On the Morning of Christ's Nativity. Milton's Hymn with Illustrations by William Blake and a Note by Geoffrey Keynes. Cambridge: The University Press, 1923.

Commentary

Saurat, Denis. Milton, Man and Thinker. London: Jonathan Cape, n.d.

(Preface dated Bordeaux, 1924.)

(Dog-eared pp.: 19, 75, 101, 139, 185, 205, 207, 254, 285, 303.)

APPENDIX X: Direct References to John Milton

Direct references to Milton are arranged chronologically according to Yeats's reference. Milton and Yeats are abbreviated to M and Y throughout.

1893

"I did not say that the man of letters should keep out of politics, but I remember the examples of Hugo, and M, and Dante . . ." (UP, I, 307).

1895

"Carleton . . . [was] like one of M's lions" (UP, I, 364).

"This would perhaps be no great matter if it drove them to read Goethe and Shakespeare and M the more and the better" (UP, I, 384).

1896

". . . it will be as though he had wandered . . . in that circle of outer space where M saw 'cowls, hoods, and habits . . . '" (UP, I, 404).

"Dante [Morris] held for a like reason to be more a poet than M . . ." (UP, I, 420).

1897

". . . [Blake] did . . . the many designs to M. . ." (E&I, 125).

"Blake had already found this 'pagan' philosophy in Swedenborg, in M . . ." (E&I, 130).

"[Blake] called Dante 'an atheist, a mere politician busied about this world, as M was . . ." (E&I, 131-32).

"The statement that round Paradise is a vacuum . . . is but another form of the charge made against M many years before in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. 'In M the Father is destiny, the Son a ratio of the five senses' . . ." (E&I, 132).

1899

"Shakespeare, Calderon, M . . . have written out of emotions and thoughts that come to them because of their profound sympathy with the life about them" (UP, II, 141).

1900

". . . England . . . would not now have that remnant which unites her to the England of Shakespeare and M" (UP, II, 240).

1902

"It is not Shakespeare and M that have been superseding the Gaelic poets in Ireland, but the half-penny comics . . ." (UP, II, 288).

"Ordinary speech is formless, and its variety is like the variety which separates bad prose from the regulated speech of M . . ." (E&I, 17-18).

". . . M was in the end to dislike rhyme as much . . ." (E&I, 357).

". . . just as [Spenser] was rising to something of M's grandeur in . . . Mutabilitie . . ." (E&I, 362).

1904

"M set the story of Samson into the form of a Greek play . . ." (E, 132-33).

"Was M an Englishman when he wrote in Latin or Italian . . .?" (E, 156).

1906

"Cf. M's Areopagitica: 'A noble and puissant nation . . .'" (n. to p. 6, l. 6, Poems of Spenser, 265).

"Cf. M's exquisite allusion in L'Allegro . . ." (n. to p. 16, l. 4, Poems of Spenser, 266).

"Cf. M's Paradise Lost . . ." (n. to p. 87, l. 4, Poems of Spenser, 273).

"Cf. John M's Latin Elegies, V and VII . . ." (n. to p. 126, l. 24, Poems of Spenser, 276).

"Cf. M's Comus . . ." (n. to p. 234, l. 25, Poems of Spenser, 281).

1907

". . . many Englishmen look back to Bunyan and to M . . ." (E&I, 248).

1909

In a lecture Y spoke of "the old writers as busy with their own sins as of the new writers as busy with other people's" and ranked Shakespeare on one side and M on the other (Cited by Ellmann, Identity, 55-56).

"Classical morality . . . had become a powerful element of this tradition at the Renaissance, and had passed on from M to Wordsworth and to Arnold . . ." (Memoirs, 180; A, 490).

"M and Shakespeare inspire the active life of England . . . through exceptional individuals . . ." (Memoirs, 184; A, 494).

1910

". . . the Catholic philosophy may be more profound than M's morality . . ." (E&I, 314).

"I had put Shakespeare among the old writers and M with the new (L, 555).

"In M, in the earnest passionate mind of M [the idea of academic morals in poetry] became a wonderful thing . . . ("Friends of My Youth," in "Yeats on Personality: Three Unpublished Lectures," ed. by O'Driscoll, Yeats and the Theatre, 27).

1913

"I am starting the poem about the King of Tara and his wife ["The Two Kings"] again, to get rid of Miltonic generalizations (Letter to Lady Gregory, 1 January 1913 in "Some New Letters from W. B. Yeats to Lady Gregory," ed. Torchiana and O'Malley, Review of English Literature, IV, 3 (July 1963), 14).

"I . . . am writing with a new confidence having got M off my back . . ." (Letter to Lady Gregory, 3 January 1913, Cited by Jeffares, Man and Poet, 167).

1916-17

"[J. F. Taylor] . . . seemed to know by heart . . . all the more famous passages in M . . ." (Memoirs, 53).

"Con Gore-Booth all through my later boyhood had been romantic to me, and more than once . . . I had repeated to myself M's lines: 'Bosomed deep . . .'" (Memoirs, 78).

"[Unionist Ireland] had [opposed our movement] not in the interest . . . of Shakespeare and M . . ." (Memoirs, 84).

1918

". . . the candle-light / From the far tower where M's Platonist / Sat late . . ." (CP, 183; AV(A), 3; AV(B), 59).

1921

". . . 'Does not M make pictures?' . . ." (A, 145).

"In a private notebook he deplored the rigidity of the Roman influence brought into English letters by M, and developed by Dryden and Pope . . ." (MS book begun 7 April 1921, cited by Torchiana, 114).

1925

". . . [Minority] rights were won by the labours of John M and other great men . . ." (From the debate on divorce, 11 June 1925 in The Senate Speeches of W. B. Yeats, ed. Pearce, 92. M is also mentioned in subsequent questioning, p. 100.)

"M was the first English writer who made philosophical use of the obliquity of the ecliptic but it was the sun's annual and not his precessional movement that enabled M in the tenth book of Paradise Lost to explain the sudden ruin of the climate when Adam was driven out of Eden. Yet he must have known of the precession for he had in his library . . ." (AV(A), 149. Cf. PL, X, 651-706, esp. 678-88).

"I see in M, who is characteristic of the moment . . ." (AV(A), 205; AV(B), 294-95).

". . . that art discovered by Dante . . . became through M Latinized and artificial . . ." (AV(A), 207; AV(B), 296-97).

". . . [the new era] . . . must awake into life, not Dürer's, nor Blake's, nor M's human form divine . . ." (AV(A), 213).

". . . every . . . child can . . . understand some few lines of M or Shakespeare (AV(A), 252).

1930

". . . The Roman people . . . destroyed M . . ." (E, 321).

1932

". . . both Dante and M and perhaps Shakespeare toiled through libraries of works with the conscious purpose of learning to think poetically, which is much the same as believing in some scheme of the world" (Cited by Monk Gibbon, The Masterpiece and the Man, 137).

1935

"[George Moore] was M's lion rising up . . ." (A, 405).

1936

". . . we need like M, Shakespeare, Shelley, vast sentiments, generalizations supported by tradition . . ." (DWL, 64; L, 853).

". . . this, received from some Miltonic cliff . . ." (Introduction, The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936), xii).

1937

". . . I offer to some young man seeking, like Shakespeare, Dante, M, vast sentiments and generalisations . . ." (Preface to The Ten Principal Upanishads, 10).

"Dante and M had mythologies . . ." (E&I, 509).

"I commit my emotion to . . . M's or Shelley's Platonist . . ." (E&I, 522).

1938

". . . I have ceased to read my brother and M . . ." (L, 907).

". . . some house party like that which saw the first performance of M's 'Comus' . . ." (OTB, 35).

". . . it is not probable . . . that they will be more in number than those who listened to the first performance of M's Comus (Death of Cuchulain, in CPl, 231).

n.d.

". . . M began it by bringing into English Literature a mass of thought 'to justify the ways of God' . . . M brought the mischief from Rome . . . even Coleridge and Shelley in much of their work follow Dryden and M . . . (MS. Cited by Parkinson, The Later Poetry, 185-86).

APPENDIX XI: Direct References to John Milton's Works

Direct references to John Milton's works have been arranged chronologically according to both Yeats's reference and the date of Milton's works.

Elegies and Italian Poems [10]

1906

Elegies V and VIII cited in n. to p. 26, l. 24, Poems of Spenser, 276.

"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity"

1937

"The two elements have fallen apart in the hymn "On the Morning . . .," the one is sacred, the other profane . . ." (AV(B), 294-95).

L'Allegro

1906

Cited in n. to p. 16, l. 4, Poems of Spenser, 266 [ll. 145-52].

1916-17

"Con Gore-Booth . . . had been romantic to me, and . . . as I looked over to the grey wall and roof I had repeated to myself M's lines: 'Bosomed deep [sic] in tufted trees / Where perhaps some beauty lies, / The cynosure of neighbouring eyes'" (Memoirs, 78) [ll. 78-80]. [11]

Il Penseroso

1921-22

"Il Penseroso's Platonist toiled on" ("My House," CP, 227).

Comus

1897

"[Blake] did . . . many designs of M, of which I have . . . seen . . . the reproductions of those to Comus, published . . . by M. Quartrich . . ." (E&I, 125).

1906

Cited in n. to p. 18, l. 22, Poems of Spenser, 267 [l. 982ff].

Cited in n. to p. 234, l. 25, Poems of Spenser, 281 ["'Of lighter toes and such court guise'" (l. 962)].

1932

"[Yeats and fellow-workers] sought religious conviction by a more difficult research: 'How charming is divine philosophy! / Not high and crabbed, as dull fools suppose, But musical as is Apollo's lute'" (ll. 472-74) [UP, II, 489].

1938

". . . some house party like that which saw the first performance of M's 'Comus' . . ." (OTB, 35).

". . . it is not probable . . . that they will be more in number than those who listened to the first performance of M's Comus" (Death of Cuchulain, in CPl, 231).

The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce

1925

Mentioned in debate on divorce in Irish Senate, 11 June 1925 (The Senate Speeches of W. B. Yeats, ed. Pearce, 92, 100).

Areopagitica

1906

Cited in n. to p. 6, l. 6, Poems of Spenser, 265 Z"'A noble and puissant nation . . . as an eagle . . . at the full mid beam'"].

Paradise Lost

1895

"Carleton . . . [was] like one of M's lions" (PL, VII, 463-65) [UP, I, 364].

1896

". . . it will be as though he had wandered . . . in that circle of outer space where M saw 'cowls, hoods, and habits . . .'" (PL, III, 490-91) [UP, I, 404].

1897

"[Blake] did . . . many designs to M, of which I have . . . seen . . . three or four to Paradise Lost, engraved by Bell Scott . . ." (E&I, 125).

1906

Cited in n. to p. 87, l. 4, Poems of Spenser, 273 ["'In Ausonian land men called him Mulciber'" (I, 740)].

Cited in n. to p. 103, l. 13, Poems of Spenser, 275 [II, 579].

1914

"I tried to pray, and because I could not remember a prayer, repeated in a loud voice--'Of man's first disobedience . . . Sing, Heavenly muse'" (A, 104) [I, 1-6].

1925

". . . the sun's annual and not his precessional movement . . . enabled M in the tenth book of Paradise Lost to explain the sudden ruin of the climate when Adam was driven out of Eden . . ." (AV(A), 149-50) [Cf. PL, X, 651-706].

1935

"[George Moore] was M's lion rising up . . ." (PL, VII, 463-65) [A, 405].

1937

"If I repeat the first line of Paradise Lost so as to emphasize its five feet I am among the folk-singers . . ." (E&I, 524).

Paradise Regained

1897

"[Blake] . . . did . . . many designs to M, of which I have . . . seen those to Paradise Regained . . ." (E&I, 125).

1906

Cited in n. to p. 114, l. 18, Poems of Spenser, 275 [II, 353].

Samson Agonistes

1904

"M set the story of Samson into the for· of a Greek play . . ." (E, 132-33).

1936

. . . ['sprung verse' of Gerard Hopkins] is the metre of the Samson Agonistes chorus . . ." (Introduction, The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, xxxix).

"I have to read lines in The End of a War as in Samson Agonistes several times before I am certain [where the stress falls]" (Introduction, The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, xl).

APPENDIX XII: Miltonic Echoes in Yeats's Work

Miltonic Echoes in Yeats's work, including affinities of thought, have been arranged chronologically according to the date of Yeats's works.

1885

"The woods of Arcady are dead, / And over is their antique joy" ("The Song of the Happy Shepherd," CP, 7). Cf. "Nymphs and shepherds dance no more / By sandy Ladon's Lillied banks. / On old Lycaeus or Cyllene hoar, / Trip no more in twilight ranks" ("Arcades," ll. 96-100) [Brooks and Hardy, 167].

". . . the cracked tune that Chronos sings" ("Happy Shepherd," CP, 7). Cf. Milton's description of the rout of Satan, PL, I, 510-12) [Jeffares, Comm, 4].

". . . Seek, then, / No learning from the starry men, / Who follow with the optic glass / The whirling ways of stars that pass" ("Happy Shepherd," CP, 8). Cf. Milton's description of Gallileo's telescope in ". . . like the Moon, whose Orb / Through Optic Glass the Tuscan Artist views," PL, I, 287-88 [Jeffares, Comm, 5].

". . . there is a grave / Where daffodil and lily wave" ("Happy Shepherd," CP, 8). Cf. ". . . Daffodillies fill their cups with tears, / To strew the Laureate Hearse where Lycid lies" (Lycidas, ll. 150-51).

"With wreaths of withered flowers / Two lonely spirits wait, / With wreaths of withered flowers, / 'Fore paradise's gate. / They may not pass the portal, / Poor earth-enkindled pair, / Though sad is many a spirit / To pass and leave them there / Still staring at their flowers, / That dull and faded are / . . . ("Love and Death," VE, 680). Cf. ". . . Adam, soon as he heard / The fatal tresspass done by Eve, amaz'd / Astonied stood and Blank, while horror chill / Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd; / From his slack hand the garland wreath'd for Eve / Down dropp'd, and all the faded Roses shed: / Speechless he stood and pale . . . (PL, IX, 888-94).

1887

"The sun has laid his chin on the grey wood" ("Anashuya and Vijaya," CP, 10). Cf. "So when the Sun in bed, / Curtain'd with cloudy red, / Pillows his chin upon an orient wave" ("On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," ll. 229-31).

1900

"How shall I name you, immortal, mild, proud shadows?" ("I walked among the seven woods of Coole," CP, 469). Cf. Milton's Invocations to his 'Heavenly Muse,' PL, I, 6-12; III, 1-8; VII, 1-2 [Harris, 15].

1902

"If Michael, leader of God's host / When Heaven and Hell are met, / Looked down on you from Heaven's door-post / He would his deeds forget" ("The Rose of Peace," CP, 41). Cf. Milton's description of the war in Heaven, PL, VI [Jeffares, Comm, 31].

1907

". . . it would set the whole man on fire and liberate him from a thousand obediences and complexities" (E&I, 249). Cf. ". . . took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds" (Areopagitica, 742).

1909-10

"To breed the lidless eye that loves the sun? / And the sweet laughing eagle thoughts" ("Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation," CP, 106). Cf. "A noble and puissant nation . . . as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam. . . ." (Areopagitica, 744-45).[13]

1914

". . . I, from that reed-throated whisperer / Who comes at need, although not now as once / A clear articulation in the air, / But inwardsly, surmise . . ." (Closing Rhyme to Responsibilities, CP, 143). Cf. Milton's Invocations to his Muse, PL, III, 40-55 and VII, 23-31 [Carpenter, dissertation, 222-24]. Also, cf. "If answerable style I can obtain / Of my Celestial Patroness, who deigns / Her nightly visitation unimplor'd, / And dictates to me slumb'ring, or inspires / Easy my unpremeditated Verse" (PL, IX, 20-24).

1915

". . . your old wind-beaten tower" ("Ego Dominus Tuus," CP, 180). Cf. "some high lonely Tow'r" (Il Penseroso, l. 86) [Jeffares, Man and Poet, 217].

1916

"What is it but nightfall? / No, no, not night but death; / Was it needless death after all? / For England may keep faith / For all that is done and said" ("Easter 1916," CP, 204). Cf. Satan's interior debate, "O had his powerful Destiny ordain'd / Me some inferior Angel, I had stood / Then happy . . . / . . . Yet why not? . . ." (PL, IV, 58-70) [Stein, The Art of Presence, 73].

1918

"He that was best . . . / . . . / . . . / Is dead ("Shepherd and Goatherd," CP, 159). Cf. "For Lycidas is dead . . ." (Lycidas, l. 8). Cf. Lycidas in general [Kermode, 36; Harris, 119; Witt, 116].

"All, all are in my thoughts to-night being dead" ("In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," CP, 148). Cf. "For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime" (Lycidas, l. 8) [Witt, 116]. Cf. Lycidas in general [Bloom, 193; Snukal, 149].

". . . the far tower where Milton's Platonist / Sat late . . ." ("The Phases of the Moon," CP, 183). Cf. "some high lonely Tow'r" (Il Penseroso, l. 86) [Harris, 106; Henn, Lonely Tower, 133].

1919

Yeats's imagery in "The Second Coming" (CP, 210). Cf. Milton's description of Satan, PL, I and II; "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation . . ." (Areopagitica, 745); "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" (stanzas of hymn, 24 and 25); ". . . as an Eagle / His cloudless thunder bolted . . . (Samson Agonistes, ll. 1693-96) [Unger, 205-11].

1921

"I am writing a series of poems [i.e., 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen' CP, 232-37)]. . . . They are not philosophical but simple and passionate. . . ." (Letter to Olivia Shakespear, L, 668). Cf. "Poetry . . . as being less subtile and fine, but more simple, sensuous, and passionate" ("Of Education," ed. Hughes, 636-37) [Holloway, "Style and World," in HG, 90].

1921-22

"The Primum Mobile that fashioned us" (CP, 229). Cf. "Now Heaven in all her glory shone, and rolled / Her motion, as the great First Mover's hand / First wheeled their course" (PL, VII, 449-501) [Jeffares, Comm, 271].

1923

"The moon is staggering in the sky; / Moon-struck by the despairing / Glances of her wandering eye / . . . ("The Crazed Moon," CP, 273). Cf. ". . . the wand'ring Moon, / Riding near her highest noon, / Like one that had been led astray / Through the Heav'n's wide pathless way" (Il Penseroso, ll. 67-70) [Whitaker, 281-83].

1926

"Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil," ("Among School Children," CP, 242). Cf. "all his midnight watchings, and expense of Palladian oil" (Areopagitica, ed. Hughes, 735).

"The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas, / Fish, flesh, or fowl . . ." ("Sailing to Byzantium," CP, 217). Cf. "Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable, / . . . / Th'earth cumbered, and the winged air dark with plumes, / The herds would over-multitude their lords; / The sea o'er fraught would swell" (Comus, ll. 713; 730-32). [Unger, 201].

"That is no country for old men. The young / In one another's arms . . ." ("Sailing to Byzantium," CP, 217). Cf. "Hence loathed Melancholy" (L'Allegro, l. 1) and "Hence vain deluding joys, / The brood of folly . . ." (Il Penseroso, ll. 1-2) [Brisman, 13-14].[14]

1927

"I am content to follow to its source / Every event . . . / . . .; forgive myself the lot! / When such as I cast out remorse / So great a sweetness flows . . . / We are blest by everything, / Everything we look upon is blest" ("Dialogue of Self and Soul," CP, 265). Cf. "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (PL, I, 254-55) [Harris, 211-12]. Also, cf. PL, IX, 807-08 and PL, IX, 121f.

1930

dolphins on "Byzantium" (CP, 280). Cf. dolphins of Lycidas [Rajan, Critical Introduction, 144].

1931

"Locke sank into a swoon; / The Garden died" ("Fragments," CP, 240). Cf. ". . . the garland wreath'd for Eve / Down dropp'd, and all the faded Roses shed / . . ." (PL, IX, 892-93).

1934

"Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn" (CP, 327). Cf. PL, VIII, 620-29 [Bloom, 408-09; Milton in general [Henn, LT, 105; Rajan, Critical Introduction, 154].

"As the moon sidles up / Must she sidle up, / As trips the scared moon / . . ." ("He and She," CP, 331). Cf. ". . . the wand'ring Moon, / Riding near her highest noon, / Like one that had been led astray / Through the Heav'n's wide pathless way" (Il Penseroso, ll. 67-70) [Whitaker, 282-83].

1938

"On the Sistine Chapel roof, / Where but half-awakened Adam / Can disturb . . ." ("Under Ben Bulben," CP, 399). Cf. ". . . whereat [Adam] wak'd, and found / . . . all real . . ." (PL, VIII, 309-11) [Harris, 205].

APPENDIX XIII: Yeats's References to Adam/Adam's, and Eden/Eden's and Paradise

References to Adam/Adam's and, Eden/Eden's and Paradise have been arranged chronologically according to Yeats's reference.

i) Adam/Adam's

1895

". . . story in The Silva Gadelica describes 'four paradises,' an island to the north, an island to the west, an island to the south, and Adam's paradise in the east" (Note to "The Wanderings of Oisin," CP, 538).

1898

". . . Miss Gyles reminds me that Adam, and things to come, are reflected in the wings on the serpent . . ." (Memoirs, 286).

1902

Title: "Adam's Curse" (CP, 88).

1904

"I have read in a fabulous book that Adam had but to imagine a bird and it was born into life, and that he created all things out of himself by nothing more than an unflagging fancy . . ." (E, 30).

". . . those rhymes / Praise Adam's paradise" (The King's Threshold, in CP1, 136).

". . . spirits in the images of birds / Crowd in the branches of old Adam's crab-tree" (The King's Threshold, in CP1, 137).

1908

". . . I saw Adam numbering the creatures of Eden. . . . 'We are Adams of a different Eden . . .'" (E, 242).

1910

"In Synge essay explain melancholy--morbidity of genius by the fact that a man of genius sees the world as Adam did, as it were for the first time. . . . The fact that he reflects the world in a strange mirror . . . makes us also see . . . as if we were Adam" (Memoirs, 250).

"The imaginative writer shows us the world . . . as we were Adam, and this the first morning. . . . (E&I, 339).

"When Adam named the beast, there was one beast that he forgot to name [i.e., Pegasus] . . ." (Memoirs, 243).

1922

"O, Adam! why did you fall asleep in the garden?" (The Player Queen, in CP1, 404).

"Sleep of Adam! . . . (The Player Queen, in CP1, 406).

". . . I announce the end of the Christian Era, the coming of a New Dispensation, that of the New Adam, that of the Unicorn . . ." (The Player Queen, in CP1, 416-17).

"Man is nothing till he is united to an image. Now the Unicorn is both an image and beast; that is why he alone can be the new Adam" (The Player Queen, in CP1, 420).

"I shall die railing upon that beat. The Christian era has come to an end, but because of the machinations of Delphi he will not become the new Adam" (The Player Queen, in CP1, 423).

". . . sleep of Adam! . . ." (The Player Queen, in CP1, 427).

"Sleep of Adam . . ."; "Sleep of Adam! . . ." (The Player Queen, in CP1, 429).

1925

". . . it was the sun's annual and not his precessional movement that enabled M in the tenth book of Paradise Lost to explain the sudden ruin of the climate when Adam was driven out of Eden" (AV(A), 149-50).

1937-38

"That girls at puberty may find / The first Adam in their thought" ("Long-Legged Fly," CP, 381-82).

1938

"One feels that [Flecker, the author of Hassan,] . . . longed to make Galahad lecherous, Lancelot a coward, and Adam impotent; to employ against them, because they are still in some sense reigning sovereigns, all the revolutionist's baser tricks" (E, 448).

"But for Adam's sin / Eden's Garden would be there" ("John Kinsella's Lament for Mrs. Mary Moore," CP, 382-84).

". . . / On the Sistine Chapel roof, / Where but half-awakened Adam / Can disturb globe-trotting madam / . . ." ("Under Ben Bulben," CP, 399).

1939

"'Then the bride-sleep fell upon Adam'" (Purgatory, in CP1, 687).

ii) Eden/Eden's-Paradise

1885

". . . story in The Silva Gadelica describes 'four paradises,' an island to the north, an island to the west, an island to the south, and Adam's paradise in the east" (Note to "The Wanderings of Oisin," CP, 538).

"Away in the green paradise" ("Island of Statues," VE, 654).

"'Fore paradise's gate" ("Love and Death," VE, 680).

1900

". . . you come from Eden on flying feet. / Is Eden far away . . .? / . . . / Is Eden out of time and out of space?" ("I walked among the seven woods of Coole," CP, 469).

1902

"Paul Ruttledge. Not the music we hear with these ears, but the music of Paradise.

. . . . . .

Paul Ruttledge. [The music I have heard] comes rejoicing from Paradise.

. . . . . .

Jerome. . . . that was not the music of Paradise (Where There is Nothing, in VP1, 1098, ll. 272, 279, 284).

". . . it is at all times the proud angels who sit thinking upon the hill-side and not the people of Eden" (E, 20).

"I said the poets hung / Images of the life that was in Eden / About the child-bed of the world . . ." (The King's Threshold, in CP1, 111-12).

". . . those rhymes / Praise Adam's paradise" (The King's Threshold, in CP1, 136).

1908

". . . I saw Adam numbering the creatures of Eden. . . . 'We . . . are Adams of a different Eden, a more terrible Eden . . ." (E, 242).

"I have been beyond the earth. In Paradise, in that happy townland . . ."; ". . . what is Paradise but fulness of life . . ." (The Unicorn from the Stars, in CP1, 362).

". . . that you may be sitting in the middle of Paradise . . ." (The Unicorn from the Stars, in CP1, 371).

"It is the music of Paradise. . . . It is certainly the music of Paradise" (The Unicorn from the Stars, in CP1, 377).

"It is a long climb to the vineyards of Eden" (The Unicorn from the Stars, in CP1, 382).

1913

"Running to Paradise"; "For I am running to Paradise"; "And I am running to Paradise"; "And I am running to Paradise"; "For I am running to Paradise" ("Running to Paradise," CP, 129).

1914

". . . you will open the lid in the Garden of Paradise" (The Hour-Glass, in CP1, 324).

1925

". . . it was the sun's annual and not his precessional movement that enabled M in the tenth book of Paradise Lost to explain the sudden ruin of the climate when Adam was driven out of Eden" (A¥(A), 149-50).

"Dream and so create / Translunar Paradise" ("The Tower," CP, 223).

1927

Title: "Countess Cathleen in Paradise" (Title: CP, 48).

1929

"Tent-pole of Eden . . ." ("Veronica's Napkin," CP, 270).

1938

"But for Adam's sin / Eden's Garden would be there" ("John Kinsella's Lament for Mrs. Mary Moore," CP, 383-84).

NOTES TO APPENDICES

[1] See Elizabethan Bibliographies, ed. S. A. and D. R. Tannenbaum (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1967), IV, 34-35, items 686 and 697.

[2] See Elizabethan Bibliographies, ed. S. A. and D. R. Tannenbaum, IV, 2-35, items 32, 56, 88, 143, 192, 228, 260, 284, 239 and 692.

[3] This remark, part of a description of Spenser's contemporaries, may well be an echo of a similar description of the literary climate of Elizabethan England in Church's Spenser, a volume mentioned in notes to Yeats's own Poems of Spenser (1906). See R. W. Church, Dean of St. Paul's, Spenser (London: Macmillan, 1888), 135. Church's study may also have been available to Yeats in an earlier edition of 1879 which was reprinted in 1880, 1883 and 1886.

[4] This remark points to Yeats's familiarity, direct or indirect, with Jonson's Conversations with . . . Drummond. Although the anecdote in the passage cited is now considered part of literary lore, it was credited by commentators in Yeats's time, including Church (231).

[5] For further discussion of the proposition that Jonson's 'Virgil' was really a representation of Shakespeare, see Desai, 39, n. 17.

[6] Yeats's description here of Shakespeare as a "quiet country gentleman" in contrast to a boisterous, hard-drinking Jonson is deeply rooted in English literary lore. Yeats may have been inspired by David Laing's comments in Notes of Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden (London: Printed for the Shakespeare Society, 1842). Laing provides information about the ongoing controversy surrounding the true nature of the two poets (Appendix, 43-51) and cites a similar description of the two as opposites from Colley Cibber's Lives of the English Poets (Laing, 40, n. 1). Yeats was undoubtedly familiar with Laing's edition since it was the only edition of the Conversations available in the nineteenth century and was added to Gifford by Cunningham in 1871. In Chapter Two of his Yeats's Shakespeare, "Yeats Among Shakespearean Critics," Rupin Desai provides an account of contemporary Shakespearean criticism which includes his observation that

Yeats's view of Jonson and Shakespeare as complementary figures is strikingly similar to that which later appeared in J. J. Jusserand's "Ben Jonson's Views on Shakespeare's Art" which was included in the Bullen edition of Shakespeare (1907) to which Yeats had declined an invitation to contribute (35). Jusserand's article may also be found in The School of Ambassadors and Other Essays (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1924), 257-90. Yeats, however, exploits that legendary relationship between the two Renaissance figures in a distinctly original fashion, especially in his description of Shakespeare as a man of Phase 20 in A Vision (AV(A), 87; AV(B), 153). He also appears to have been familiar with it much earlier in his career since it is implicitly present behind his description of Shakespeare in the final paragraph of "At Stratford-on-Avon" (1901) (E&I, 110).

[7] Donoghue's date.

[8] That "bull" is identified as a passage from Timber; or Discoveries by Desai, Yeats's Shakespeare, 38, n. 15.

[9] Yeats's use of the word "rammed" makes this remark also an echo of Jonson's line from Poetaster [V, i, 136].

[10] Ellmann reports that Yeats proposed emendations to Agnes Tobin's translations of Milton's Italian poems with which Yeats must, therefore, have also been familiar (Identity, 130).

[11] Donoghue notes that "deep" (l. 78) should read "high" (78, n. 2).

[12] Note also that Hone reports that when Yeats commenced his essay on 'Synge and Ireland' ["J. M. Synge and the Ireland of his Time"] in 1910, he was "reading a little of Milton's prose every morning before he began to work" (W. B. Yeats, 240). Unger speculates that that "prose" was Areopagitica ("Yeats and Milton," 198).

[13] Cf. also "These are the Clouds" (1910); "To a Wealthy Man . . ." (1912-13); "The Hawk" (1916); "The Second Coming" (1919) [Unger, 205] and "An Acre of Grass" (1936).

[14] Brisman cites this parallel to support the contention that "creativity begins with self-denial" in as much as each poem opens with an acknowledgement of "a fuller world than the poem ostensibly sets out to argue for." Another parallel is drawn on the same basis between "The unpurged images of day recede" and "Images that yet / Fresh images beget . . ." and the opening lines of L'Allegro and Il Penseroso. Similarly, "all complexities of fury leave, / Dying into a dance"

("Byzantium," CP, 281) has been paralleled with the dancing out of complexities by Comus and his rout when the Lady enters the poem [Brisman, 13-14].

[15] Following Wilson (W. B. Yeats and the Tradition, 183) Jeffares and Knowland suggest that Yeats's reference to "Sleep of Adam" in The Player Queen (CPl, 406) as well as the line from Purgatory, "'Then the bride-sleep fell upon Adam,'" (CPl, 687) echo line 165 of "Eden Bower," D. G. Rossetti's treatment of the Eden Story (Commentary on the Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats, 149 and 295; see also l. 83 of "Eden Bower"). Yeats's attention to Rossetti's poem is understandable in view of his early interest in the Pre-Raphaelites (see especially "The Happiest of Poets" (1902), E&I, 53-64). Certainly it is complementary to his ongoing interest in Milton's Paradise Lost.